

**If attacked by bees,
leave the area quickly
and find shelter in a
building or car!**



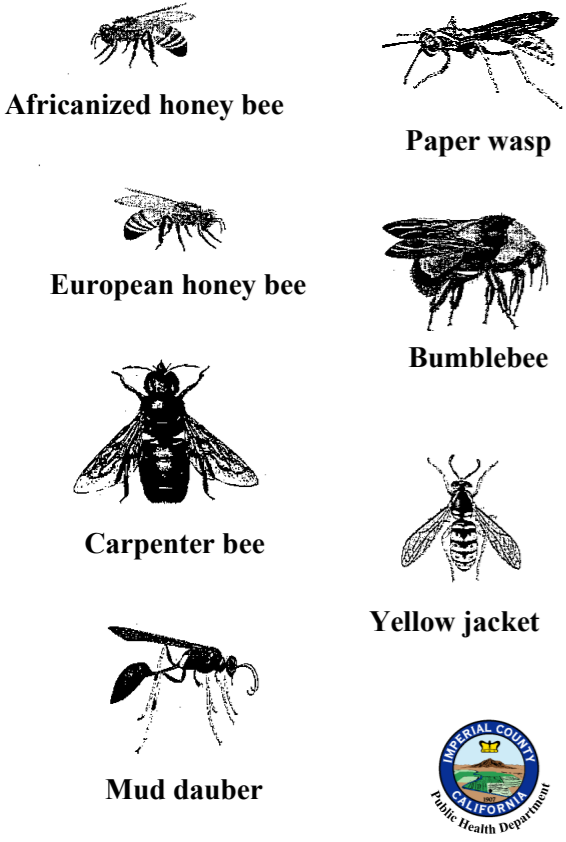
Bee

Alert:

Honey Bee Facts

Honey bees are not the only stinging insects people may encounter. People are often stung by other bees and wasps that look and behave differently from honey bees.

Stinging Insects



Africanized vs. European Honey Bees

It is difficult to visually distinguish Africanized honey bees (AHB) from European honey bees (EHB). Only through USDA-ID testing can the species be verified.

- AHB are more defensive—defend their nest with less provocation, in greater numbers and for longer distances.
- AHB swarm as many as sixteen times per year—EHB swarm only once or twice a year
- AHB are not selective of nesting sites—they will quickly inhabit empty spaces, holes or cavities. EHB are more selective and prefer drier sites 3 or 4 feet above ground.

Efforts taken to control Africanized honey bees (AHB) must assure the continued maintenance of beekeepers' hives. If EHB were eliminated in an area, the wild Africanized honey bees would quickly fill the gap.



People can coexist with bees by learning about the bee and its habits, supporting beekeeping efforts, and taking a few precautions.

**For additional information
in Imperial County
contact:**

(760) 336-2252

**Please call the above number for the
following purposes:**

- * Reports of bee problems
- * Reports of bee stinging incidents
- * Requests for bee safety information
- * To schedule a bee safety presentation for your business, organization, or group



Imperial County Public Health Department
Environmental Health
Vector Control

Call **(760) 336-2252** if you have a bee-related issue in Imperial County



The Africanized Honey Bee

Africanized Honey Bees (AHB) are descendants of southern African bees imported in 1956 by Brazilian scientists attempting to breed a honey bee better adapted to the South America tropics. When some of these bees escaped quarantine in 1957, they began breeding with local Brazilian honey bees, quickly multiplying and extended their range throughout South and Central America. In the past decades, AHBs began arriving in North America. The first report of Africanized honey bees in the United States was made in Hidalgo, Texas in 1990. Since then, they have been found throughout the southern United States.

Bee Safety

Whenever possible, avoid contact with honey bees and **never disturb a bee nest or swarm.**



Because honey bee colonies are found throughout Imperial County it is important to learn about the habits of honey bees, common nesting sites, general precautions that you can take, how to bee proof your home, and what to do if you are stung.

Honey bees nest in many locations where people may encounter them.

Nesting sites include:

- Empty boxes, cans, buckets, or other containers
- Lumber piles, holes and cavities in fences
- Old tires
- Infrequent used vehicles
- Inside and around trees
- Shed, garages, outside walls and eaves of homes, and other outbuildings.
- Low decks or spaces under buildings



Bee-Proof Your Home

- Remove possible nesting sites around your home and yard
- Inspect outside walls and eaves of home and outbuildings
- Seal openings larger than 1/8" in walls, around chimneys and plumbing
- Install fine screens (1/8" hardware cloth) over tops of rain spouts, vents, and openings in water meter/utility boxes
- From spring to fall check once or twice a week for bees entering or leaving the same area of your home or yard.

General Precautions



- Listen for buzzing indicating a nest or swarm of bees
- Use care when entering sheds or outbuildings where bees may nest
- Examine work area before using lawn mowers, weed cutters, and other power equipment
- Examine work area before tying up or penning pets or livestock
- Be alert when participating in all outdoor sports and activities
- Teach children to be cautious and respectful of **all** bees
- Check with a doctor about bee sting kits and procedures if sensitive to bee stings

Do not disturb a bee nest or swarm!

The Imperial County Public Health Department's Vector Control Program responds to bee-related calls. Staff eradicates swarms and provides assistance with information and public presentations. However, Vector Control staff does not remove bee colonies. Bee colony / nest removal requires specific pesticides that only licensed pest control companies can use and it may require a structural license to be able to work within a building. Private pest control companies can assist with the eradication and removal of bee colonies / nests.

Call **(760) 336-2252** if you have a bee-related issue in Imperial County.

As a general rule, stay away from all honey bee swarms and colonies. If bees are encountered:

- Get away quickly.
- While running away, try to protect your face and eyes as much as possible.
- Take shelter in a car or building.
- Remember, water or thick brush does not offer enough protection.



Do not stand and swat at bees; rapid motion will cause them to sting!

What To Do If Stung

- Go quickly to a safe area
- Remove the stinger as soon as possible
- Do not squeeze the stinger; pressure will release more venom
- Scrape the stinger out with a fingernail, knife blade, or credit card
- Wash sting area with soap and water like any other wound
- Apply an ice pack for a few minutes to relieve the pain and swelling
- Seek medical attention if you have trouble breathing, if stung numerous times or if you are allergic to bee stings

