

Got bees?

Are you SURE??

There are many insects out there in nature - especially the East Texas woods. Very few of them are honey bees! If you have honey bees, they should be saved, if possible. Call a beekeeper. If you have something else, call an exterminator. How do you tell the difference? One of the most common insects beekeepers get called out for is the Yellow Jacket. Beekeepers are NOT exterminators and, by law, are not allowed to destroy their nests, so it is pointless to call them, if you have Yellow Jackets. Look at the pictures below. Notice how the Yellow Jacket (on the left) is...well...Yellow - with black stripes all the way from head to tip of tail. The Honey Bee (on the right) has yellow and black stripes but just on the tail area. The upper part of the body is a furry brown, not at all like the Yellow Jacket.

If you have the one on the left, or something that does NOT look like the one on the right - call the exterminator.

If you are sure you have the one on the right, call a beekeeper.



YELLOW JACKET



HONEY BEE

Now, if you do have Honey Bees, are they already established in a nest? Are they coming out of a hole or opening in a building or other object? Or are they in a cluster out in the open, maybe hanging from a tree limb? Is that tree limb 80 feet up or 6 feet? These are things a beekeeper needs to know - BEFORE he comes out.

SWARMS

In the Spring and Summer (and sometimes Fall and even Winter in East Texas), bees will "swarm". This usually means a nest has become too large for the available space. When this happens, the Queen and older bees leave the nest to look for a new place to live. They are usually seen as a ball of bees hanging from a tree limb or other object. The Queen is usually in the center of the ball. Scout bees are flying around looking for a suitable location to build a new nest - which may turn out to be in your eave or under your front porch! If you have a swarm near you - what to do? Many beekeepers in the East Texas Beekeepers Association will remove swarms.

NESTS

If the Honey Bees are NOT a swarm but an established hive, the beekeeper needs to know the details of the location. Is it in an eave, a wall, under the house, in a water meter, a tree, etc. Depending on the location, the beekeeper will need specialized equipment. The number of beekeepers who have the specialized equipment for bee removal from eaves and walls is much smaller than the number who will get swarms. As with Yellow Jackets, it is pointless to get the wrong guy (or gal) for the job. Tell the Beekeeper all the details before he comes out so you aren't wasting his and your time.

Thankfully, there are some Beekeepers who have the tools and skills to remove bees from walls and eaves and most other places. To locate a beekeeper to remove a swarm or nest call:

Dick Counts, 903-566-6789

DICKCOUNTS@BIGPLANET.COM

Dick is the principle Director of the East Texas Beekeepers Association and he knows most of the local beekeepers who do removal and can direct your request. Be patient - don't expect someone to come running out in minutes. Most beekeepers have

other jobs and beekeeping is just a hobby. Expect to pay something too. In years gone by, just getting the "free bees" may have been pay enough, but not with today's gas prices. Getting the bees out for you may be an expensive proposition for the beekeeper, requiring several trips and hours of his time. In many cases he could buy better bees than he is going to remove from your house and for less money! So, if he is willing to spend time and money to help you, be prepared to reimburse him (or her) for his trouble. There are no set fees but most beekeepers are not trying to make a living from bees, so their services are usually quite reasonable. Whatever the fee turns out to be, just ask yourself if YOU would do it for less??

One more thing you should know - if you think you just want to have the bees in your wall or attic exterminated - consider what happens when you have literally thousands of dead bodies decaying in near proximity to your living space! It usually takes a VERY long time for nature to take its' course. And, when you don't smell them any more, guess what - other bees will smell the honey and wax comb and move right in, taking over where the last colony left off. The bees need to be removed, the honey and wax needs to be removed AND the entrance to the nest needs to be permanently plugged to prevent a re-infestation.