

Honeybee Swarms



Traditionally honeybee swarming season occurs during spring and early summer, however in the Rio Grande Valley swarming may happen year-round. Honeybees swarm due to many factors but the main two are:

- Running out of space in the original hive
- Sudden destruction of old home

Swarms that have been “cast” from their original hives are often docile and are spotted when resting on trees. These bees have no home to defend and are unlikely to attack.

Resting swarms will linger in one area to ensure the queen is healthy and ready to keep traveling. Swarms may only stop for a few hours but may also rest for 2-3 days depending on the weather, nest site selection process, queen bee health.

How to handle swarm encounters

As swarms are unlikely to create an open air nest on a tree branch or exposed surface, it is possible to simply wait until they leave.

Beekeepers can be called to relocate swarms. Beekeeping associations throughout Texas often have “Swarm Lists” for people to call.

txbeeinspection.tamu.edu/bee-removal/

Do not try to force the bees to leave or repel them after they’ve already landed; some bees may try to defend themselves, or may be inadvertently killed.

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Established 2018

Specializing in live honeybee removals across
the Rio Grande Valley

Perfect Bee Nesting Sites

Honeybees prefer secure nesting sites off the ground and away from frequent activity, however bees can potentially nest in anything they can get in to.

Here are common nesting sites for bees:

- Walls or soffits of homes
- Under sheds or dog houses
- Inside abandoned tires
- Overturned buckets or old trash
- Inside brick or cinderblock fences/pillars
- Water meters, telecom pedestals, electrical vaults, breaker boxes
- Inside hollow trees (such as old ash trees)



All feral bees in the RGV are Africanized Honeybees (AHB) and they slightly different house hunting requirements than their European (EHB) counterparts . While the average EHB prefers a large cavity of around **31 liters (8 gallons)** in volume, the Africanized honeybee colony will use spaces as small as **13 liters (3.4 gallons)**.

A honeybee only requires a hole 3/16th of an inch (roughly 5 millimeter) wide to fit in. If one bee can fit in, a whole colony can.

Pink line indicates on a ruler how wide 3/16th of an inch is. Please note that the ruler will not be to scale, and the green bar indicates how large the average credit card is in comparison.

Where to Look

Preventing honeybees from nesting in a structure can be easy when the building is properly maintained and can be seamless added to any regular cleaning and maintenance schedule.

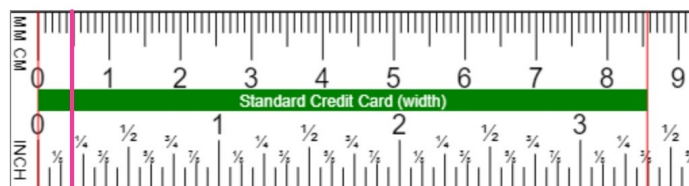
All areas of a home need to be inspected. The most common nest location is in the wall and soffits of a home where wood as warped or has weather damage. Keep a list of areas that need to be addressed to ensure all tasks are accomplished.



Materials and Tools

- Silicone or latex caulking
- Staple gun and staples
- Wire mesh (very fine) or window screening
- Wood filler or wood putty
- Quick concrete or tubed concrete filler
- Cutting tools (snips, knives, etc)
- Duct or Gorilla tape (for temporary fixes_

Note on spray foam: Expanding spray foams are often used as quick fixes to patch holes. Bees can easily chew through the foam and drop the crumbs outside the nest site. Foam with pesticides do not affect bees.

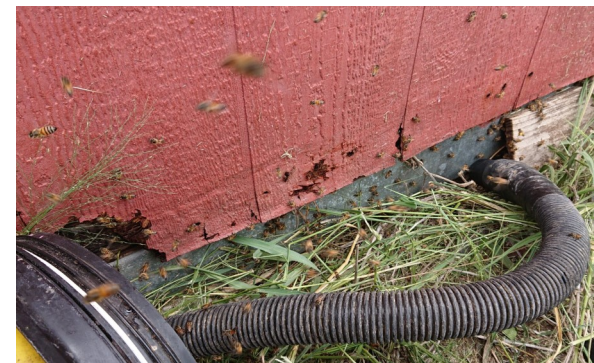


Materials that have begun to rot such as wood soffits should be completely replaced to ensure a long term and solid fix.

Special attention to rooflines should be taken when inspecting a building. Many homes have large gaps where different level rooflines intersect. These gaps can be sealed with silicone caulking or by attaching mesh to the opening.

The 1' x 2' boards running under the soffit often separate from the walls of a building, especially on stone and brick homes. Those should be filled with silicone caulking around the entire perimeter. (See image on prev panel)

Stone and brick fences can get chips or wholes in the mortar that can be filled with silicone or masonry caulking. This can also be used to fill holes around piles or wires for stone homes.



The bottoms of sheds should either have skirting completely flush with the ground, or should be covered by: concrete pad, raised garden bed, mesh screening.

Spray foam can be used to fill in large gaps (such as the image below) but then must be covered by silicone, mesh, concrete, or similar materials.

Yard work is important to ensure there are no objects bees can nest in hiding in the brush or grass. Keep property clear of tires, old large equipment, or unused barrels.

Water meters and electrical boxes can be protected with water proof tape. This has to be inspected regularly to ensure quality.

