

Honey Bees and Native Bees



Honey bees were brought to America from Europe in 1622. They have coexisted with America's native bees for almost 400 years. Honey bees work side-by-side with many native pollinators, like humming birds and butterflies.



Honey bees have become the most important pollinator in our food chain because colony populations and hives are easy to move between crops. Commercial beekeepers oversee most of the managed honey bee colonies in America. Their bees



are used to pollinate nearly 90 California crops (over 100 across the country). Most of our fruits, vegetables and livestock forage crops are planted from seeds produced by honey bee pollination. Please help us in our efforts to sustain our essential pollinator, the honey bee.

What to Expect When Working With Beekeepers

CSBA members are good stewards of the land and are conscious of the needs of landowners. Professional beekeepers usually:

- Carry general liability insurance
- Compensate landowner for use
- Report to the landowner immediately if something seems out of place
- Leave only footprints
- Use caution with vehicles operated around grasses and weeds
- Stay on roads
- Remain apprised of IPM programs and anticipated pesticide applications
- Return soil and streambeds to original condition, if disturbed
- Always leave a gate exactly as it was found
- Always clean up any refuse
- Always follow local fire prevention protocols



The purpose of the California State Beekeepers Association is to educate the public about the beneficial aspects of honey bees, advance research beneficial to beekeeping practices, provide a forum for cooperation among beekeepers, and support the economic and political viability of the beekeeping industry.

Feed the bees, feed America!

California beekeepers are facing a critical shortage of safe, natural pasture upon which to place their bees when not pollinating crops.

The majority of the food you eat directly or indirectly requires honey bees in its production. California's honey bee population is struggling to survive. Like people, bees require a diverse, nutritious, pesticide-free diet in order to thrive. We need help in finding those honey bee forage locations. Please contact us if you would like to host hives on your property.

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What are some benefits of having bees on my property?

- Bees are critical in the pollination of most flowering plants, including native species.
- Increased pollination results are: higher seed set, better fruits and nuts, and perpetuation of native plants.
- An abundance of plants increases habitat and forage for livestock and wildlife.
- Bee-pollinated plants allow better water infiltration and improve soil fertility.
- Bee activity assists quicker fulfillment of reclamation contracts.
- Honey bee pollination of forage legumes improves nitrogen fixation in pastureland.
- Bee pollination of clovers helps with the seed set of these forage plants.
- Copious seeds from bee pollination contribute to plant growth for erosion control and re-establishment of recently burned-over areas.
- Beekeepers are good stewards of the land. They can assist land managers in detecting unauthorized activities near their apiary locations.
- Bees leave a "green footprint" benefiting the environment wherever they go.
- Provides opportunities to assist beekeepers in their efforts to sustain an species of extreme value to food and fiber production in America.



Land beekeepers look for.

- Access to clean and safe forage areas
- Access roads with minimal grades
- A semi-flat section of land
- Room to load and offload a truck
- A place to turn a truck around
- Daytime access to work the bees
- Nighttime access to move bees in or out
- A location secured by a gate is preferred
- An alert landlord who notices unexpected activities in the apiary and contacts the beekeeper



How to behave near bees:

Pay attention to your surroundings. Bees foraging in plants or getting a drink are not interested in you, and are not aggressive. Leaving them alone is best.

Honey bees become more defensive nearer their hives. Remain at a safe distance.

Occasionally a honey bee might land on you. It should leave quickly, or can be brushed away. If a bee becomes tangled in your hair, you should kill the bee before it stings.

What is a commercial apiary?

An apiary is the location where honey bees are kept. The number of hives in an apiary varies depending upon the size of the beekeeping operation.

A source of water is important. If none is nearby, the beekeeper supplies water to prevent the bees from becoming a nuisance to surrounding neighbors.

Most commercial beekeepers use flatbed trucks and forklifts to transport their bees. Beekeepers normally move their hives at night.

Beekeepers inspect their hives every few weeks and sometimes daily.

The number of colonies that an area can support varies from season to season and year to year. Frequently, the most influential component is the amount of previous rainfall.

Beekeepers often use removable, solar-powered electric fences to deter predators.

A "bee smoker" is an essential tool. It is a metal can with a nozzle at the top and attached to a bellows that blows cool smoke through the chamber holding smoldering fuel. Typically white bee suits and bee gloves are used to keep plant resins and other sticky materials off clothing. However, blue jeans and T-shirts are the chosen bee suit of many beekeepers.