



Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
CHARLES H. BRONSON, Commissioner

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LIVING WITH AFRICANIZED HONEY BEES
Bee Aware . . . Look, Listen and Run

TALLAHASSEE—Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Commissioner Charles H. Bronson announced today that public education activities are underway in the state's effort to protect people and animals from the dangers associated with the growing population of Africanized honey bees (AHB). AHB are the defensive cousins of European honey bees who, through Florida's vital honey bee industry, provide pollination that result in the production of approximately one third of the food we eat.

The Department monitors over 500 AHB bait traps throughout the state. Since their initial discovery in Florida in 2002, AHB have been positively identified in over 20 Florida counties, with the majority of stinging incidents in South Florida.

"Every week, reports of possible Africanized honey bee nest sightings or stinging incidents are received by the Department," said Bronson. "We have formed an AHB inter-agency communications group to help get the word out about things the public can do to prevent attacks. The motto of the group, **Bee Aware...look, listen and run**, was chosen because if people will regularly monitor their surroundings and run inside a protective structure, when threatened, they can avoid potentially dangerous, painful attacks from Africanized honey bees," said Bronson.

The Department has been working with the University of Florida's Institute of Food & Agriculture Sciences (UF/IFAS) on presentations to over 100 statewide organizations; exhibited information at conferences, festivals, and fairs; distributed thousands of information packets; and provided interviews to news media and interested parties on AHB – a grassroots public education effort that has resulted in reaching over 4,000,000 people. Ongoing outreach program efforts include identifying partnering opportunities at major county events. The Department plans to reach as many people as possible in all 64 Florida counties to deliver important messages about AHB and Florida's important beekeeping industry.

The Department's helpline receives frequent calls from people who know about the dangers of AHB, but are confused about what they are supposed to do if they see a nest of bees. People should stay away from insect nests and call a licensed pest control company to remove the nests. They should never try to remove a nest themselves. A list of licensed pest control operators by county is available at www.doacs.state.fl.us/pi/plantinsp/ahb.html. To prevent stinging incidents, the Department urges the public to follow these important guidelines:

- If allergic to bees, always have a bee sting kit available.
- Eliminate potential AHB nesting sites (see attached photo). Check walls and eaves of structures. Plug holes.
- Stay alert for bees. Look for bees in work areas before using power equipment such as weed eaters, lawnmowers

and chainsaws – noise excites AHB.

- If bees chase you, run away and get inside a car or building.
- Contact a licensed pest control company to remove nest. DO NOT attempt to remove it yourself.
- Seek medical attention if needed.

“It is important to remember that managed honey bee colonies are critical to Florida agriculture and these more gentle honey bees should not be confused with the highly defensive Africanized honey bee,” Bronson said. “Floridians are used to living among dangerous animals and insects – education is the key to staying safe.”

For more information contact 888-397-1517 or visit www.doacs.state.fl.us

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BEE AWARE of your environment

Esté consciente de su medio ambiente

Africanized Honey Bee Potential Hive Locations

Lugares potenciales de panales de abejas africanizadas



- BEE AWARE OF:**
- mailboxes
 - culverts
 - meter boxes
 - attics
- ESTE PENDIENTE DE:**
- buzones de correo
 - alcantarillas
 - cajas de medidores
 - áticos

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