

TREATING YOUR ANIMAL

LOOK FOR STINGERS once the animal is away from bees. When a honeybee stings, it loses its venom sac and stinger. This means the honeybee dies after it stings, but the stinger may continue to inject venom for up to a minute or until the stinger is removed. If you can see stingers on the animal, remove them by scraping them out with a credit card, knife or fingernail. Do not pull them out with tweezers or fingers because you will squeeze more venom into the sting.

IF AN ANIMAL HAS SUSTAINED NUMEROUS STINGS, EMERGENCY TREATMENT BY YOUR VETERINARIAN MAY BE REQUIRED. The number of stings an animal can survive depends on its body weight, the amount of venom it received and whether or not it is allergic to bee venom. As with humans, even one sting may be dangerous if the animal is allergic.



Stinging Insects

Honey bees are not the only stinging insects. People and animals may encounter. This illustration shows some common stinging insects. You should take precautions when encountering any of them.

Stinging Insects *



European honey bee



Africanized honey bee



Bumblebee



Yellow jacket



Mud dauber



Paper wasp

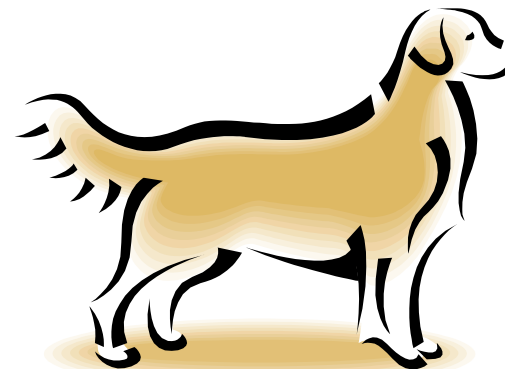


Carpenter bee

* All insects shown approximately life size.



BEE STINGS AND YOUR PETS AND LIVESTOCK



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Africanized honeybees (AHB), sometimes called “killer bees,” became established in Texas in 1990 and are spreading to other states including Georgia.

The Africanized honeybee is related to our state’s familiar honeybee, the European honeybee. The two types of bees look the same and their behavior is similar in many respects. Each bee can sting only once, and there is no difference between Africanized honeybee venom and that from a European honeybee. Africanized honeybees, however, are less predictable and more defensive than European honeybees. They are more likely to defend a greater area around their nest and respond faster and in greater numbers than European honeybees.

In other words, you and your pets and livestock are more likely to get stung around Africanized honeybees than European ones, but learning about AHB and taking certain precautions can lower the risk of being stung for you and your animals.

When bees defend their colonies, they target dark-colored objects that resemble their natural enemies, such as bears and skunks. Your dog’s fur, for example, is not going to protect it from being stung. Your pet’s size will not offer protection, either. Animals that are penned up or tied near AHB nests are at an even higher risk of being stung.

Protecting Animals

MAKE A REGULAR INSPECTION OF YOUR PROPERTY FOR BEE NESTS.

Honeybees nest in a wide variety of sites, such as trees or shrubs, animal burrows in the ground, water meter boxes and overturned flower pots. Look for active bees and listen for a buzzing or humming sound.

DO NOT PEN, TIE OR TETHER ANIMALS NEAR BEE NESTS. Keep animals away from bee nests and even beehives. Bees may seem docile at first, but do not take chances.

DO NOT DISTURB OR TEASE BEES AND DO NOT TRY TO REMOVE THEM YOURSELF. Do not shoot at, throw rocks at, pour gasoline on, or use aerosol pesticides on bee nests, since this will only arouse the bees.

KEEP PETS AND CHILDREN INDOORS WHEN USING WEEDEATERS, HEDGE CLIPPERS, TRACTORS, POWER MOWERS, CHAIN SAWS OR OTHER MOTORIZED EQUIPMENT. Honeybees are sensitive to unusual odors, such as cut grass, and to loud vibrations. Attacks frequently occur when a person is mowing the lawn or pruning shrubs and trees and inadvertently strikes a bee or wasp nest.

STAY ALERT WHEN HORSEBACK RIDING through brush or under low-hanging branches where bees might nest.

KEEP DOGS UNDER CONTROL WHEN HIKING. A dog bounding through the brush is more likely to disturb bees than one following quietly at your heels.

IF YOUR ANIMAL IS STUNG

REACT IMMEDIATELY! Without endangering yourself, try to get the animal away from the bees. Call your dog inside your house or car or release the animal **if it will not harm itself or others nearby.**

DO NOT ATTEMPT TO APPROACH A PERSON OR AN ANIMAL BEING STUNG WITHOUT SOME SORT OF PROTECTION (such as a beekeeper’s suit or from inside a car), because the bees may attack you as well. If you approach an animal that is being stung, remember that an injured animal may bite or attack unexpectedly. If you release penned livestock, be aware that an unrestrained animal may run into the road and be hit by a car or may run away. In addition, if the animal runs to you with aroused bees following it, you are likely to be stung, too.