

•BUZZING

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the bees will begin the process of swarming. Termites also divide their homes in the same manner. When the time arrives for the division, the queen will leave the hive with a work force of honey engorged older bees and younger wax producing bees seeking a new cavity usually within a couple of miles of the old home. They will live by harvesting the nectar of flowers until they can build the comb to store the food and begin the new generation. Upon leaving the hive, the queen will land on some surface to rest and let scout bees seek sources for the new home. They will form a large cluster, as everyone will surround the queen because of pheromones being released by the queen. Upon a consensus of the scout's finding a new location, the queen will take flight with the attendants all heading for the new home.

During the months of April, May, and June, these swarms are usually a surprise to homeowners upon being discovered on a shrub when mowing or seeing new activity of bees within a wall of the home. When sighted as a swarm, most are not in a protective phase as the bees are full of food and no colony home is built for guarding. Their main goal is finding a secure location and contacting a beekeeper with correct information of height, size, and time of notice will assist the safe transfer of the swarm to a valued home.

The importance of pollination in fruits, nuts, and vegetables brings the honeybee colony to a greater value as the hive can easily be transferred to a new location and quickly function without a great loss to the colony. Each day the honeybee nectar troops leave the hive and orient their location according to the sun and locate food sources for harvesting. Upon returning home the bee communicates the source and location by "dancing" the directions to sister bees in relation of distance and the sun.

With some plants' need of transfer of pollen grains from one flower to another flower for their seed reproduction, the insect becomes a vital partner in the process. The nectar rewards the insect for visiting and transferring the pollen between male and female flowers or to a different variety of fruit. The more pollen grains are transferred the greater diversity of genes of the plant, as well as larger fruit production. With large acreage of single crops, the insects are overwhelmed to effectively pollinate all the plants. Relocation of beehives to the vast acres will increase the number of insects pollinating thus economically increasing



fruit set as well as size. For instance, check your apple for the quantity of seeds within. Ten seeds will be considered perfectly pollinated and nicest size fruit. With only five seeds, the apple bloom could have received more insect visits and transfer of pollen, producing larger fruit. Try counting the seeds in cantaloupe when you have extra time and looking for something to do. Same with watermelon and cucumber as misshapen fruit is evidence of a lack of complete pollination by insects, the more seeds mean larger fruit.

Another misnomer with the honeybee, where the production of food is related, is that we would starve without their pollination services in our nation. Honeybees are not native to the American lands as they were transferred with the pioneers from Europe and Asia during the early settlement of the new world. Native Americans observed the "white man's fly" as

the settlements increased and became aware of pioneer intruders within their peaceful habitat upon seeing the newly introduced insect. Be mindful, our produce would not be as plentiful without the honeybee's introduction into pollination arenas; yet native insects would be able to pollinate the basic food crop.

Upon seeing a swarm of honeybees, contact the UK Extension Service of your county as they usually maintain a beekeepers list.

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