



# FERAL HONEY BEES

*Points to consider  
when asked to treat  
a honey bee nest*



# F E R A L H O N E Y B E E S

Points to consider when asked to treat a honey bee nest

## HONEY BEES ARE BENEFICIAL INSECTS

Honey bees, both feral (wild) and colonised, are important beneficial insects, not normally considered as pests. They live either in the wild in nests, or as colonies in hives kept by beekeepers. In either case, they will only sting people if strongly provoked.

Because of their beneficial role, every effort should be made to avoid carrying out control treatments against honey bees. Treatment with a pesticide should be considered only as the last resort.

## RISKS FROM TREATED NESTS

If foraging non-target honey bees find a nest which has been treated, they will carry away contaminated honey. This can lead to contamination of honey destined for food use, serious bee kills, and the destruction of hives.

## SHOULD YOU TREAT A HONEY BEE NEST ?

If asked to treat a feral honey bee nest, you should assess the situation carefully. Have people been stung by honey bees from the nest, or are they at risk because of its location? If the nest is not causing any risk to public health then you should carefully consider the alternatives before carrying out a treatment.

## WHAT PRECAUTIONS SHOULD YOU TAKE ?

If you consider treatment is the best option, make use of the British Beekeepers Association's spray liaison scheme. This will enable local beekeepers to be warned by their own Spray Liaison Officer. It is important for you to talk to local beekeepers in this way before treating a nest.

Remember, members of the British Beekeepers Association can provide advice and can sometimes remove accessible feral honey bee colonies, avoiding the need to use pesticides.

Only use an HSE approved insecticide. Always read the label and use pesticides safely.

Once the treatment is complete, you should take every reasonable action to prevent foraging honey bees from gaining access to the treated nest, by removing the combs or blocking the nest entrances.

## POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Assess the situation carefully before treating.
- Make use of the British Beekeepers Association's spray liaison scheme.
- Only use an HSE approved insecticide.
- Take every reasonable action to prevent foraging honey bees from gaining access to the treated nest, by removing the combs or blocking the nest entrances.
- Always read the label and use pesticides safely.

For further advice, please use the contact addresses on the back of this leaflet.



## USEFUL ADDRESSES

Health and Safety Executive  
Pesticides Registration  
Section

Magdalen House  
Stanley Precinct  
Bootle  
Merseyside  
L20 3QZ

Tel: 0151 951 3535  
Fax: 0151 951 3317  
e-mail [info.prs@hse.gov.uk](mailto:info.prs@hse.gov.uk)

British Beekeepers  
Association  
National Agricultural Centre  
Stoneleigh  
Warwickshire  
CV8 2LZ  
Tel: 01203 696679

National Bee Unit  
Central Science Laboratory  
Room No 10GA05  
Sand Hutton  
York YO41 1LZ  
Tel: 01904 462510

British Pest Control  
Association  
3 St James' Court  
Friar Gate  
Derby  
DE1 1BT  
Tel: 01332 294288  
Fax: 01332 295904

National Pest Technicians  
Association  
45 Wilford Lane  
West Bridgford  
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you may find helpful in  
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to do.

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