

Wasps and other insect pests are not the prerogative of the Beekeeper and not all Beekeepers will treat or kill them. These are usually dealt with by the Pest Control Officer of the local council.

Generally speaking a Beekeeper close to you will be contacted when you seek assistance in dealing with a swarm of honey bees. However, it should be remembered that this is a voluntary service.

**SWARMS ARE THE
BEES WAY OF
INCREASING THEIR
STOCKS WITHOUT
HELP FROM MAN**

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Honey Bee Swarms What to do?



Bees and the Environment

The reason that beekeepers and environmentalists take bees so seriously is not just for the nutritious honey that they produce but for the part that they play in the food chain and in the environment in general.

Over seventy crops depend on the honey bee for pollination. The advantage of the honey bee is that it survives the winter as a colony so it is ready to start pollinating as soon as the spring arrives. Colonies can consist of 50,000 bees.

In addition, the honey bee is loyal to a crop and will pollinate it until the nectar and pollen run out. Fruit growers and farmers depend on bees to carry out the pollination of their crops, such as apples and field beans. Some of our garden plants, hedgerows and wild plants depend on pollination by the honey bee for their survival.

Bees help the environment and form a vital link in the food chain.

The advent of *Varroa jacobsonii*, a mite found in this country for the first time in April 1992 has made it important for the beekeeper to take extra care of his bees. Wild bees will eventually die out but beekeepers can keep their bees going by careful management.

**Honey Bees are important for the
Economy and the Environment.**

SWARM COLLECTION AND WHO TO ASK?

Swarms are the honey bees' natural way of increasing the stocks available in the wild. They normally leave the nest or hive with the old Queen bee and most of the flying bees which include the wax builders to enable them to build a new home at their new site. Some of you may have noticed that swarms initially hang from the branches of trees. If the bees remain for any length of time before leaving, or being taken by a beekeeper, you will see the beginnings of beeswax secreted on the branch.

Beekeepers, endeavour to stop their bees swarming. They regularly inspect their colonies to look for the signs that the bees are going to swarm and take appropriate action. Sometimes even this does not prevent the determined colony.

The bees gorge themselves on honey just before they swarm and are normally in a calm state and providing you do not annoy them, they will leave you alone. In any case they are normally on the look out for some warm and snug cavity for their new home.

Beekeepers will normally respond to a call to remove a swarm and take it away for you at a nominal charge or in some cases no charge at all.

WHAT TO DO

If you have a swarm in your garden then the first thing to do is to keep all children and pets well away from it. The bees will not bother them but it is better to be safe than sorry. Your local library, the Environmental Health Department of your local Council or, as a last resort, the local Police will assist. All should have a list of Beekeepers who are willing to help. Local Beekeeping Associations often operate a swarm collection service. Some Councils are now charging upwards of £50 to deal with a swarm or a wasps' nest. Normally bees will be dealt with by a Beekeeper who may require reimbursement for his expenses. You should be aware that most house insurance policies allow claims for getting rid of swarms. Obtain a receipt from the Beekeeper.

Do seek assistance as soon as possible. Once a swarm has gone into a chimney or cavity, it is usually difficult to remove and will probably have to be killed.

Swarms in lofts, sheds etc may require the removal of **boarding etc**. Beekeepers are not insured to cover this aspect. It is a voluntary service they provide.

**IF YOU HAVE A SWARM, STAY
CALM AND SEEK THE RIGHT
ASSISTANCE**