

A Bug's Life Honey bee swarms

European honey bee or western honey bee: Apis mellifera

Fun facts

- Swarming is the process by which a new honey bee colony is formed
- Swarms usually occur in April and May
- Queen bee leaves the colony with a group of worker bees surrounding her
- Swarming bees are not defensive because there is no hive or home with brood and honey stores to protect
- Swarm may last for several hours while scout bees look for a new home



Identification

- Honey bees are a mustard yellow and brown color, hairy and stocky
- Swarm consists of hundreds of honey bees clustered on a tree branch or other stationary object
- Social wasps are often mistaken for honey bees, but honey bees will never be on a gray paper nest (paper wasps) or fly out of a hole in the ground (yellowjackets)



Management

- Confirm honey bee swarm by sending a photo to the Extension office
- Contact a local beekeeper to safely remove the swarm
- Do not use insecticides
- If honey bees occupy a wall cavity of a structure, this is NOT a swarm
 - Contact a licensed and insured person, experienced in destructive honey bee removals

