

REIGATE BEEKEEPERS



A Division of the Surrey Beekeepers Association
Founded 1879
Charity No. 1026386
Website :- www.reigatebeekeepers.org.uk

SWARM COLLECTION

Reigate Beekeepers members are drawn from a large area of South-East Surrey, taking in the approximate boundaries of Reigate and Banstead, Mole Valley, and Tandridge District Councils.

Our unpaid and volunteer swarm collectors, are routinely often able to successfully contain and remove reported catchable Honey bee swarms in response to calls for our assistance from Councils, Police, Fire Stations, or directly from the public via our Website. We can make no charge for this service; however, donations to **Reigate Beekeepers**, are always welcome.

Honey bee swarms

Swarming may occur from April to November, & peaks between May & August. The behaviour is unique to the Honey bee, being its natural means of reproduction, by division, of the colony. A large number of Honey bees, including a queen, fly en-masse from their home nest – whether a managed hive or wild - to establish a separate nest for themselves. When leaving their home nest, the swarming bees have no specific new site in mind, but rely on scout bees to find a suitable enclosed cavity. The body of the swarm will then hang in a cluster, at a fixed temporary base such as a tree branch, to which the scouts report.

Danger from swarms

As a rule, undisturbed or unthreatened, swarms will ignore humans, and not sting. In this state they have no home to defend (the usual trigger for stinging), and are satiated with honey on which they gorged before leaving their old home.

Despite this docility, the wisest course for an onlooker is to:

- **Keep away from the swarm and leave it alone.**
- **Report and describe its location promptly, so that a beekeeper can arrange to hopefully capture the swarm before it can move onto an unwanted place.**
- **On NO account swat or try to move the swarm themselves.**

The need to catch swarms

Once a beekeeper has captured the swarm within an appropriate receptacle, he will remove the entire colony (preferably at dusk when all bees have stopped flying) to a chosen site where they can be managed and provide pollination for local plants and crops and their honey can be harvested.

However, if a swarm is not caught within just a few hours of initially clustering, it will eventually leave the cluster point and follow its scouts to a cavity, such as a chimney stack or roof void. A colony may survive for a long time (months & years) in such locations, from where they can become a nuisance, may not be readily removed or managed, or their honey harvested; without breaking into the structure they occupy.

Wasps and other types of Bee

Many reports we receive and attend are found not to relate to Honeybees.

We cannot deal with other types of flying insects, such as Wasps, or Bumble, Mason & Mining bees. Although resembling Honey bees, none of these cluster as the Honey bee does, at a fixed point, balling en masse. Nor are their numbers so large.

To avoid false alarms, establish at the outset that the report is of a catchable Honeybee swarm, i.e. bees clustered & attached to some fixed but reachable point in the open & not already nesting in a cavity.

To deal with Wasps, callers should be recommended to seek the advice of their Council's Pest Control Service, or of a reputable Pest Control Contractor.

Contacts

For catchable swarms, please refer to the following members of **Reigate Beekeepers** who have volunteered to try to help with catching swarms in or near the areas listed below.

Abinger Paul Cleaver on **01306 730188**
or mobile **07767 887867**
Banstead Cyril Humphries on **01737 358355**
Charlwood Kevin Arlove on **01293 863995**
or mobile **07956 580791**
Dorking David Allbeury on **01306 876389**
or mobile **07860 227451**

Fetcham Richard Bradfield on **01372 379222**
or mobile **07923 600266**
Horley Gerry Poole on **01293 774041**
or mobile **07887 877448**
Redhill Eddie Webster on **01737 765619**
Reigate Richard Woodhouse on **01737 247395**
or mobile **07710 245993**

Should the member for the area most local to the reported swarm not be immediately contactable (by either number where applicable), please try another member from an adjacent area. Do not rely upon leaving voice mail messages to be picked up and acted upon, the bees may not wait!