

Bees

Albert Einstein said, “If bees were to disappear from the globe, humankind would only have four years left to live”. Needless to say, bees are an essential part of our ecosystem.



The western honeybee, *Apis mellifera*, is the most common species worldwide. They are often kept in suburban areas to take advantage of local flora.

Honeybees live in colonies that contain a queen bee, worker bees and drones. Worker bees clean the hive, collect pollen and nectar to feed the colony and take care of the offspring. Drones are male honeybees whose primary role is to mate with an unfertilized queen.

Any person keeping one or more hives of honey bees in NSW will need to be [registered](#) as a beekeeper with the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI), even if registration is already obtained in another state or territory.

Beekeepers are governed by provisions of the NSW Biosecurity Act 2015.

Swarms

Bees swarm when they feel overcrowded. It is a natural occurrence.

Amateur Beekeepers Association

A swarm occurs when the queen bee, accompanied by up to half the worker bees, leaves the nest (wild) or hive and searches for a new home.

Upon leaving the nest or hive, the swarm will often only travel a short distance (up to 100m) and gather on a nearby tree branch, house eave or other handy structure while scout bees travel further afield to locate a permanent site.



If you have bees swarming in your backyard or local area, it is best not to interfere or kill them as it is likely to anger them and may cause the bees to sting. Bees will not sting if they are left alone. But should a swarm decide to settle on your property, keep children and pets inside until the flying bees have settled on to a bush or other object.

To remove hives or swarms, contact a local [beekeeper](#) to assist.

Native Bees

Australia's 1500 native bee species are vital to our ecosystem, pollinating and assisting our native biodiversity. Of these, 200 species are endemic to Sydney, and only one of those species is a social bee - as in, they live in a colony and produce honey. The 'solitary' bees build their own nests, and many can benefit from the support of a bee hotel.

[Bee hotels](#) are designed to provide suitable nesting opportunities for aerial, cavity-nesting species that would usually seek out old beetle holes in wood, other small, pre-existing tunnels or hollow plant stems.

[Native Stingless Beehives](#) can be purchased to benefit biodiversity. Contact Council's Environmental Sustainability and Waste team on 9330 6400 for advice on obtaining a native stingless beehive.



Nuisance Bees

The Department of Primary Industries will investigate nuisance bee complaints and ensure that standardised compliance actions are consistently applied. Nuisance bees can be [reported](#) to the DPI.

Honeybee – fun facts

- All worker bees are female.
- A bee produces a teaspoon of honey (about 5 grams) in her lifetime.
- To produce a kilogram of honey, bees fly the equivalent of three times around the world in air miles.
- The type of flower the bees take their nectar from determines the honey's flavour.

For further information:

For further information regarding bees, please contact:

[Department of Primary Industries](#)

or

Council's Environmental Health Officer on:

Phone: 9330 6400

E-mail: mail@georgesriver.nsw.gov.au