

Bee Information and Warnings

Recently some residents have had beehives removed from their property. As you may know, most bees in Arizona are Africanized bees and there have already been newspaper articles this summer regarding bee attacks. If you have noticed bees on your property, please contact a professional bee removal company rather than try to remove it yourself. If you notice any nests or swarms in the development, please contact Kit Stewart, 577-2652.

In an effort to keep all informed, the following information was copied from <http://phoenix.about.com/cs/desert/a/killerbees01.htm>.

"The sting of the Africanized Honey Bee is no more potent than your garden variety honey bee and they look pretty much the same. What makes AHBs more dangerous is that they are more easily provoked, quick to swarm, attack in greater numbers, and pursue their victims for greater distances. The AHB colony can remain agitated longer and may attack up to a quarter of a mile away from the hive.

AHB colonies can be very large, and they are not particularly selective about the location of their hives. The Queen Africanized bee can lay up to 1,500 eggs a day. AHBs are likely to develop near canals, drainage ditches and retention basins because they like to be near water. When they sense rain, they swarm. In Arizona, the AHB colonies have grown and the more aggressive colonies are the ones that have survived the droughts of the past few years. The summer is the peak period for bee attacks because there is less honey, and the bees become more protective of their hives.

Here are some common sense tips to help you avoid having to deal with an angry swarm of killer bees:

Africanized Honey Bees: Do's and Don'ts:

- DO*** check around your house regularly for bee colonies. Check storage sheds, dog houses, meter boxes, flower pots, trees, shrubs, and crevices. Seal cavities and crevices.
- DO*** keep pets and children inside when using lawn mowers, clippers, blowers, or any other equipment that makes noise or could inadvertently disturb a beehive.
- DO*** be careful moving or cleaning up debris or items that have been lying around outside the house.
- DO*** notice if you see a few bees coming in and out of cracks in walls, utility boxes or other enclosed places.
- DO*** have an escape plan in mind if a bee attack occurs.
- DO*** wear light-colored clothing. Not only around your home, but when hiking or visiting unknown areas.
- DO NOT*** wear floral or citrus perfumes or after shave lotion when doing yard work or hiking.
- DO NOT*** try to remove bee hives without professional help. To get assistance, check your Yellow Pages for Beekeepers, Bee Removal Services, Bee Supplies or Pest Control Services.
- DO NOT*** panic every time you see a few bees in some flowers. Bees are very important and productive insects (when they are not attacking!) which is why there is no wholesale program for destruction of bees.

If A Bee Attack Occurs:

Even if you follow all the above mentioned tips, a bee attack can still occur.

- Quickly get into a house, car, tent or other enclosure. Close any doors or windows.*
- Do not jump into the pool. The bees will wait until you surface for air to attack.*
- If you are attacked by bees, run away. Don't play dead or swat at the bees. Most people can outrun the bees, but you might have to run a few blocks.*
- Protect your face to prevent stings to the eyes, nose and in the mouth. Bees attack where carbon dioxide is expelled. Facial stings are much more dangerous than stings to the body. Pull your shirt over your head if no other protection is available."*

The Effects of Using Poison for Pack Rats

There's no doubt that pack rats can be very destructive to your property, but before you put out any poison you need to be aware of some of the dangers of using these. In fact, the EPA reached an agreement with the manufacturer for d-con rat and mouse poison to cancel some of their products that posed not only a risk to wildlife but to pets and children as well.

Here in our neighborhood, many of you out walking may have seen the owlet down at the end of Avenida Ronca. We were watching its progress as it developed and it was just beginning to get its adult feathers and try its wings. Unfortunately, it was found dead underneath its nest. Evidence was found of it consuming pack rats and it is suspected that it fell prey to secondary kill from poison. It has been documented by wildlife agencies that raptors are at high risk from this type of death.

The following was copied from the Audubon website <https://www.audubon.org/magazine/january-february-2013/poisons-used-kill-rodents-have-safer>

"Clinical assistant professor Maureen Murray of the [Tufts Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine](#) in central Massachusetts was doing a good job of keeping her emotions under wraps as she clicked through photos of her recent necropsies. But I was watching her eyes as well as her computer screen, and they revealed anguish. Like her colleagues here and at similar clinics around the country, Murray is a wildlife advocate as well as a scientist. Each image was, in her word and my perception, "sadder" than the last. There was the great horned owl with a hematoma running the length of its left wing; the red-tailed hawk's body cavity glistening with unclotted blood; sundry raptors with pools of blood under dissected skin; the redtail with a hematoma that had ballooned its left eye to 10 times normal size; and, "saddest of all," the redtail with an egg. The well-developed blood vessels in her oviducts had ruptured, and she had slowly bled to death from the inside.

All these birds were victims of "second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides" used by exterminators, farmers, and homeowners. They're found in such brand names as d-Con, Hot Shot, Generation, Talon, and Havoc, and they sell briskly because of our consuming hatred of rats and mice. The most pestiferous species are alien to the New World and therefore displace native wildlife; they contaminate our food and spread disease. We also hate them for their beady eyes, their naked tails, and their vile depictions in literature, from Aesop to E.B. White. So the general attitude among the public is "if a little poison's good, a lot's better." But even a little second-generation rodenticide kills non-target wildlife.

Both first- and second-generation rodenticides prevent blood from clotting by inhibiting vitamin K, though the second-generation products build to higher concentrations in rodents and are therefore more lethal to anything that eats them. The second generation was developed by Imperial Chemical Industries of London at the request of the [World Health Organization](#), because rats appeared to be developing tolerance to warfarin, a first-generation rodenticide.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service contaminants specialist Michael Fry makes this point about the widespread use of second-generation rodenticides by people oblivious to the dangers: "One good reason for using first-generation poisons is that if you do have a problem, like developing tolerance, you want a backup. If you go in with your strongest thing first, there's no backup."

For a rodent to get a lethal dose from a first-generation rodenticide it has to eat it more than once, but that's not a problem. Leave first-generation baits out for a week and they're just as efficient as the second generation. What makes second-generation rodenticides so non-selective is that they kill slowly, so rodents keep eating them long after they've ingested a lethal dose. By the time they expire, or are about to, they contain many times the lethal dose and are therefore deadly to predators, scavengers, and pets.

Because they are weapons of mass destruction, second-generation rodenticides are the preferred tool wildlife managers use to restore native ecosystems to rat-infested islands. But the EPA has declared them too dangerous for public use and ordered them off the general market. They're still widely available, however, because stores have huge stocks and because a recent court decision has allowed three of the largest manufacturers to defy the order.

Many of Murray's patients don't have enough red-blood cells to deliver oxygen to their tissues, so they are logy. Their heads droop, the linings of their mouths are pale; some bleed from their eyes, nose, lungs, or other organs. In 2011 she found rodenticides in 86 percent of the raptor livers she examined, and all but one contained brodifacoum, especially deadly to birds. She rehabilitates some patients by injecting them with vitamin K, but the birds still retain rodenticides and are likely to accumulate more after they are released.

There's no safe place or safe delivery system for second-generation rodenticides. After a rodent partakes, it stumbles around for three to four days, displaying itself as an especially tempting meal not just for raptors but for mammalian predators, including red foxes, gray foxes, endangered San Joaquin kit foxes, swift foxes, coyotes, wolves, raccoons, black bears, skunks, badgers, mountain lions, bobcats, fishers, dogs, and house cats—all of which suffer lethal and sub-lethal secondary poisoning from eating rodents. Deer, non-target rodents, waterfowl, waterbirds, shorebirds, songbirds, and children suffer lethal and sub-lethal poisoning from eating bait directly."

Before you put out the poison, please investigate other options. Rat traps have been made safer and easier to use along with the introduction of new shock traps. I found the people at Ace Hardware on Sunrise and Swan especially helpful while researching other methods to deal with pack rats. **Please think twice about the effects before you put out the poison.**