Best Management Practices for Beekeeping in Napa County

Napa County Beekeepers' Association *September 27, 2012*

Purpose
The purpose of this document is to establish a reference and standard for honeybee management in Napa County.

AREAS OF BEEKEEPING MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC CONCERN

- **Hive Density, Quantities**
- **Siting, Screening, Barriers, Fencing and Flyways**
- **Colony Temperament and Behavior**
- **Considerate Hive Management**
- **Swarming**
- **Provision of water**
- **Disease Control**
- **Our Values**

Hive Densities, Quantities

The following hive densities are established to minimize potential conflict between people, honeybees and their keepers.

Suggested maximum number of hives in relation to lot size:

Lot /Acreage	Number of Colonies
Up to 1/4 acre (1/4 acre = 10,890 sq. ft.)	3 colonies
More than 1/4 acre, less than 1/2 acre (1/2 acre = 21,780 sq. ft.)	5 colonies
More than 1/2 acre, less than 1 acre (1 acre = 43,560 sq. ft.)	7 colonies
1 acre or more	10 colonies per acre maximum

Some locales may not support the maximum hives allowed. Hive densities are ultimately limited by available forage and by interaction with neighbors and the public.

Siting
Hive placement is one of the most important decisions a beekeeper will make. The amount of sun and shade a hive will receive throughout the day, availability of water, availability of screening, and the proximity to neighbors and/or public areas are major factors to consider. Hives should be placed as far away from occupied, developed neighboring areas as practical to prevent nuisance.

Screenings, Barriers, Fencing and Flyways
Special attention must be exercised to redirect the bees' flight path to avoid neighbors and the public. Locate screenings, foliage, shrubs, trees, fencing and barriers that will help to minimize human and animal contact. Screening should be of sufficient density and length to establish bee flyways above head height (6 feet) in all directions.

Colony Temperament and Behavior

- Bees that are consistently defensive should be relocated or re-queened.

Considerate Hive Management
Beekeepers should perform hive manipulations as quickly as possible with minimum disturbance to the bees following these guidelines:

- Work hives when forager activity is satisfactory, when calm, warm and foragers are out.
- Avoid working hives when neighbors are nearby or the bees are defensive.
- Robbing leads to defensive behavior, avoid working hives when robbing is a risk.

Swarming
Honeybee colonies should be managed to minimize swarming.

- Beekeepers who learn of a nearby swarm should take reasonable measures to see that swarms from their hives are retrieved to prevent it becoming a nuisance.

Provision of Water

- Beekeepers need to provide a suitable source of continuously available water for their bees.

Disease Control
It is incumbent on beekeepers to monitor and manage disease and pests to ensure colony health.

- Beekeepers should take remedial action to prevent spread of disease.

Our Values
The Napa County Beekeepers' Association encourages sustainable beekeeping, benefiting bees, their keepers and the environment through methods in tune with nature. We recognize that through natural selection bees become better adapted to our local climate, forage and disease risks. We foster better genetic fitness in our locally adapting bees through propagation of the healthiest productive local stocks.

We advocate protection of the bees' habitat and the planting of pollinator friendly flowers, trees, shrubs and cover crops to provide pollen and nectar for our bees and native pollinators.

We are mindful that use of many pesticides, chemicals, and treatments should be avoided as they are detrimental to bee health and long term species sustainability.

Our association inspires, provides camaraderie and helps to educate interested individuals on how to best steward this precious insect and resource that is in a precarious period of change.

Together we learn, nurture and maintain the adapted genetic diversity of our regional bee populations so crucial for pollination and the continuance of life as we know it.

For more information on the Napa County Beekeepers' Association, join our yahoo group at:
http://pets.groups.yahoo.com/group/beekeepersofnapavalley/