

Honey Bee Etiquette: How to Be a Good Neighbor

1. Situate hives away from lot (property) lines and occupied buildings.
2. Locate hives away from roads and areas frequented by pedestrian and animal traffic.
3. In populated areas, uses fences and hedges as screens to conceal hives and to elevate the bees' flight path. Vegetation and fences also serve as windbreaks.
4. Do not situate hives on or next to utility right-of-ways (power lines, pipelines or underground cables).
5. Avoid placement of hives near schools, recreation areas, picnic grounds or other locations that may result in adverse honey bee/public interactions.
6. Provide a water source so the bees don't fix on neighborhood swimming pools, birdbaths, livestock/pet water sources, etc. The water source must be established before the weather gets hot so the bees are trained to it. Provide fresh water on a regular basis.*
7. Keep no more than four hives on a lot less than 1/2 acre.
8. Maintain gentle colonies. If hives become defensive, determine the cause and re-queen with gentle stock if necessary. Skunks are often the reason for hives to suddenly become defensive.
9. Work bees when neighbors are not in their yard. Minimize robbing behavior.
10. Manage hives for swarm prevention.
11. When mowing the grass in front of hives, direct the clippings and exhaust away from the entrance.

12. Give your neighbors some honey or pair of beeswax candles each year and share your enthusiasm and knowledge of beekeeping with the community.

* Common water sources include birdbaths, pebble filled sections of gutter with end caps, plastic wading pools and entrance feeders. Pieces of carpet, screen stapled to wooden frames, Styrofoam floats and stones and pebbles provide ample footing for the bees to prevent drowning. The addition of salt (water softener, pickling, sea) or sugar often aids in the training process of honey bees.