

A GUIDE FOR BACKYARD APIARISTS

Bee Prepared

Anyone with a bit of space in their backyard can get into beekeeping. With the introduction of the *Flow Hive*, there is no need to purchase expensive honey extraction equipment. Hobby beekeepers, with little effort, can have their fresh honey for family and friends. Backyard veggie gardens will benefit from increased pollination, resulting in more sustainable living. However, backyard beekeeping comes with quite a few responsibilities. Ensuring that you've ticked all the boxes before you start will mean you don't have a run-in with the neighbours or the authorities.

As of 1 July 2017, the *Apiaries Act 1985* has been replaced by the *NSW Biosecurity Act 2015*. The following guide has been developed based on information provided by NSW Government Department of Primary Industries. Visit www.dpi.nsw.gov.au to view the entire *NSW Biosecurity Act 2015*.

CONDITION OF REGISTRATION

All beekeepers in NSW who own bee hives must be registered with NSW DPI.

Failure to register may result in a fine plus the destruction of your hives if they have disease. A registration fee is payable every second year. On registering you will receive a registration number. All your brood boxes must be branded with this number so that it is clearly readable.

Beekeepers must not keep bees in a hive other than a frame hive. A frame hive is either a hive containing only movable frames which may be separately and readily removed for examination or a hive containing fixed frames in the honey-super boxes of the hive, movable frames in the broodbox, and a queen excluder. The excluder should be fitted immediately above the broodbox of the hive in order to prevent the queen from gaining access to the honey-super boxes of the hive.



All beekeepers must keep a written record (which may be in electronic form) of the following and retain that record for a period of 3 years:

- The dates of all apiary inspections and observations including any pests or diseases found.
- Details of all actions taken to manage any pests or diseases.
- If a hive is moved from one location to another (date of occurrence, new location, number of hives moved and who moved the hive).
- Details of introductions of any bees and used hives or components from external sources.
- If a hive has been lost, stolen or destroyed (date of occurrence, number of hives).
- If a beekeeper disposes (including by sale) of a hive to another person, they must notify DPI (date occurrence, number of hives, method of disposal, the name and address of the person to whom the hive was disposed).
- Details of biosecurity-related training by the beekeeper.

A person must ensure that normal access to any hive owned or operated by the person is at all times clear from any obstruction that may prevent or impede the inspection of the hive.

Number of Hives

Council recommends a maximum of two hives to be kept on urban residential properties. A hive can contain as many as 50,000 bees per colony during its peak. This is sufficient to obtain some honey for yourself and others. If you wish to keep bees, it is important to discuss this with all neighbours.

Handling of Bees

It is recommended that any handling of the bees or the hive be conducted wearing personal protective equipment during the day with warm, sunny weather. This is the time when the most aggressive bees will be out in the field.

When a bee hive is opened, the bees take several hours to settle down. So, it is suggested to aim at opening your hive to work it in the late afternoon which allows the bees to settle down overnight.

Water

You must provide a source of water close to the hive for the bees, which use the water for controlling the temperature and humidity of the hive.

The water source should be replenished regularly, and you should provide landing sites for the bees to prevent drowning. This can be done by using rocks or sand protruding from the water surface.

A common complaint from neighbours relates to bees in and around their swimming pool, so by providing an alternative source of water for the bees, you will reduce nuisance to neighbours. Once bees start foraging from a given area, it is impossible to stop them, apart from moving the hive out of the area. Your bees may still collect water from several locations, but at least you have taken steps to reduce the problem.

Swarming

Swarming of bees is very alarming to the general public, but it is a natural occurrence. It is important that you become familiar with the stimuli that promote swarming and take measures to reduce it.

- Re-queen regularly with a reduced swarming strain.
- Relieve the brood nest of full combs of honey and replace with empty combs.
- Remove frames of capped brood and transfer to weaker hives.
- Remove a nucleus colony (artificial swarming).



Location in the yard

There are three things to consider when locating an apiary on your property: the bees, the neighbours and you.

Hives should be located in a dry, sunny area in the backyard of the premises. The hives must be designed and located so the flight path of the bees is a minimum of 2m above neighbouring properties, human traffic areas, footpaths, back doors, vegetable gardens and the like. This can be achieved by using screens, shrubs, walls, hedges, fences, etc.

Council recommends that hives be located at minimum distance of 10m from any neighbouring residential dwelling, and 50m from any school or child care centre.

The hive entrance should not face an outside light as this will attract bees when it is on.

Please visit www.dpi.nsw.gov.au for more information.