

Safe and Effective BEEKEEPING in Madison, WI



Why People Use Honeybees

The honeybee (*apis mellifera*) is a critical pollinator for flowers, fruits and vegetables. This is of great benefit in the city where pollinating insect populations are usually significantly smaller than in rural areas. Managed colonies of bees help to increase the yields and the quality of a large variety of plants found in backyard gardens, municipal parks, and flowerbeds. Hives of honeybees are currently established in most every major city in the United States. Beehives are successfully kept in small back yards, on balconies and rooftops in congested urban environments with little, if any, impact to adjacent property owners. In addition to the benefits of plant pollination, the honey, beeswax, pollen and other hive products are high in nutritional value and are a local, renewable and sustainable resource.

Beekeeper Responsibilities

If you plan to keep honeybees in the City of Madison, it is best to talk to your neighbors ahead of time, and explain the behavior and benefits of beekeeping. Be prepared to address their concerns, as your neighbors will be noticed when a license is requested. Beekeeping in the city should utilize best practices to avoid creating problems for your neighbors. With some planning, beehives can be safely located in close proximity to homes, gardens and other places where people spend recreational time. You will be responsible for monitoring your bees on a regular basis for the health of the hive and to ensure that you have not created a nuisance to others. Limit your beekeeping activities to times when it will not interfere with your neighbors' activities and enjoyment of their property.

Honeybee Behavior

Honeybees are naturally gentle and non-aggressive. They may sting if they perceive a threat to their colony, but only as a last resort as the bee will die shortly after depositing its stinger. While foraging for nectar and pollen away from the colony, honeybees are completely docile and only concerned with the tasks they set out to do. In most cases, people living in close proximity of beehives will never know that the honeybees are around.



Beekeeping Resources

State of Wisconsin

The state of Wisconsin Department of Agriculture provides a great, free hive inspection service in the Spring and Fall, through Craig Petros, State Apiary Inspector. Call 262-968-5391.

Dane County Beekeepers Association

<http://www.madbees.org/home>

University of Wisconsin Madison

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Henry Vilas Zoo Discovery Center and Herpetarium (located near Wingra Beach)

Vilas Zoo has maintained hives for 20 years.
<http://www.vilaszoo.org/>

Beekeeping Code - Revised 2/2012:

Keeping of honeybees, provided that:

- a. No hive shall exceed twenty (20) cubic feet in volume***
- b. No hive shall be located closer than three (3) feet from any property line.***
- c. No hive shall be located closer than ten (10) feet from a public side walk or twenty-five (25) feet from a principal building on an abutting lot.***
- d. A constant supply of water shall be provided for all hives.***
- e. A flyway barrier shall shield any part of a property line that is within twenty-five (25) feet of a hive. The flyway barrier shall consist of a wall, fence, dense vegetation or a combination thereof and it shall be positioned to transect both legs of a triangle extending from an apex at the hive to each end point of the part of the property line to be shielded.***
- f. The owner, operator, or tenant obtains a license under Sec. 9.53, MGO.***
- g. The applicant for the license notifies all residents of the property and the owner or operator of the property if the applicant is not the owner or operator. Notification is not required for renewal of a license."***