



## **Killer Bees**

If you suspect killer bees have taken up residence nearby it is recommended that you bring pets inside. If you suspect killer bees have taken up residence nearby it is recommended that you bring pets inside and contact A Bee Gone. Killer bees will attack dogs, cats, cattle, horses and other livestock. Precautionary measures include sealing any external places in the home where bees might find entry and nest, such as roof vents, cracks, crevices and holes in the walls and eaves of your home.

Killer bees look virtually identical to the common honey bee, which are not native to the United States. Honey bees were first imported from Europe by settlers to produce honey. European honey bees are docile, more discriminating than killer bees about where they choose to make their hives, and produce honey. The sting from a killer bee produces the same venom as a common honey bee. The only difference is killer bees attack in higher numbers and with less provocation.

Easily agitated and aggressive, Killer bees earned their name by these characteristics of killing victims by overpowering them with sheer numbers and hundreds of stings. Something as simple as a vibration, noise, or even the smell of fresh cut lawn can set off a swarm of killer bees, unlike your common honey bee. Once agitated, killer bees can chase a fleeing victim. These Killer Bees will even swarm on top of the water if the victim jumps into a lake or pool, waiting for the victim to come up for air. Killer bees will kill both animals and people alike.

Warwick Estevam Kerr, a Brazilian scientist, was tasked with discovering why the European honey bees in South America were not producing adequately, in 1956. Kerr crossbred bees from tropical Africa, known for being aggressive, with European honey bees. The new strain, called Africanized bees, escaped before a selection process could be completed that would have curbed the aggressive nature of the new strain.

The first migration of killer bees to arrive in the United States was in Hidalgo, Texas in October 1990. For 5 years they continued their colonizing throughout southern portions of the United States. Some experts believe they could eventually colonize all the way north into Canada. In Brownsville, Texas, May 1991 was the first human attack in the United States. The first human fatality in the United States was in Harlingen, Texas, in July 1993.

If attacked by killer bees, experts recommend running and covering your head and face, which are the most attacked body parts. Find shelter in a building or car. A bee can only sting once, then it dies, but

the stingers left in the skin contain sacs that will continue to pump venom, so remove stingers promptly and seek medical attention.