

GOOD NEIGHBOR BEEKEEPING GUIDELINES

Prepared by Wiregrass Beekeepers Association

Congratulations on your interest in beekeeping! The following information and guidelines are prepared to help you get started in this wonderful undertaking and enjoy it successfully within the City of Dothan for years to come.

SECTION 1, Local Beekeeping Contacts

Wiregrass Beekeepers Association: www.wiregrassbeekeepers.com

(officers are elected annually so the most current contacts and information will be found on the website)

Randy Hamann, Alabama Department of Agriculture: 334-714-0978

Phillip Carter: ACES, 334-714-3458

Bill Miller, EAS Master Beekeeper: 240-483-2192

SECTION 2, Basic Guidelines

Hive Registration

All honey bee colonies shall be registered with the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries.

Management Practices

Beekeeper shall keep written records of his hives showing compliance with Best Management Practices published by the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries.

Hive Type

All honey bee colonies shall be kept in Langstroth-type hives with removable frames, which shall be kept in sound and usable condition.

Fencing of Flyways

In addition to city standards for distance of hives from property lines, beekeepers may want to consider installation of a flyaway barrier at least 6 feet in height consisting of a solid wall, fence, dense vegetation or combination thereof so that all bees are forced to fly at an elevation of at least 6 feet above ground level over property lines in the vicinity of the apiary.

Water

Each beekeeper shall ensure that a convenient source of water is available to the bees at all times during the year so that the bees will not congregate at swimming pools, pet watering bowls, bird baths or other water sources where they may cause human, bird or domestic pet contact.

General Maintenance

Each beekeeper shall ensure that no bee comb or other materials are left upon the grounds of the apiary site. Upon their removal from the hive, all such materials shall promptly be disposed of in a sealed container or placed within a building or other bee-proof enclosure.

Equipment

Each beekeeper shall maintain his beekeeping equipment in good condition, including keeping the hives painted if they have been painted but are peeling or flaking, and securing unused equipment from weather, potential theft or vandalism and occupancy by swarms. It shall not be a defense to this ordinance that a beekeeper's unused equipment attracted a swarm and that the beekeeper is not intentionally keeping bees.

Queens

All colonies shall be maintained with marked queens. In any instance in which a colony exhibits unusual aggressive characteristics by stinging or attempting to sting without due provocation or exhibits an unusual disposition toward swarming, it shall be the duty of the beekeeper to promptly re-queen the colony with another marked queen. Queens shall be selected from European stock bred for gentleness and non-swarmling characteristics.

Colony Densities

- (a) It shall be unlawful to keep more than the following number of colonies on any tract within the city, based upon the size or configuration of the tract on which the apiary is situated:
1. one quarter acre or less tract size – 2 colonies,
 2. more than one-quarter acre but less than one-half acre tract size— 3 colonies.
 3. more than one-half acre but less than one acre tract size – 5 colonies.
 4. one acre or larger tract size – 10 colonies, allowing for an additional 5 hives per full acre on tracts exceeding two acres.
 5. regardless of tract size, where all hives are situated at least 200 feet in any direction from all property lines of the tract on which the apiary is situated, there shall be no limit to the number of colonies.
 6. regardless of tract size, so long as all property other than the tract upon which the hives are situated, that is within a radius of at least 200 feet from any hive, remains undeveloped property, there shall be no limit to the number of colonies.
 7. tracts of land exceeding the numbers of allowed hives at the time this ordinance is enacted may remain in place, however should the number of hives decrease at any time they may not be replaced with new hives if such replacement would keep that number above the allowed number of hives for that size tract.
- (b) In addition to State of Alabama Apiary Inspection Law regarding identification of honey bee hives: the beekeeper shall conspicuously post a sign setting forth his/her name and phone number. It is a defense against prosecution under this subsection that a colony is kept upon the same tract upon which the owner resides.
- (c) Unless marked in accordance with subsection (a) it shall be presumed for purposes of this article that the beekeeper is the person or persons who own or otherwise have the present right of possession and control of the tract upon which a hive or hives are situated. The

presumption may be rebutted by a written agreement authorizing another person to maintain the colony or colonies upon the tract setting forth the name, address, and telephone number of the other person who is acting as the beekeeper.

Nucs

For each two colonies permitted to be maintained under this ordinance, there may also be maintained upon the same apiary lot, one nucleus colony in a hive structure not to exceed one standard 9-5/8 inch depth 5-frame hive body with no more than one super. Nucleus colonies do not count as part of the total colony count for a colony density determination.

Inspection

Each Alabama Apiary shall be inspected and a report issued by an authorized representative of the Department of Agriculture at such intervals as the Department deems best for detection of honey bee pests and unwanted races of honey bees.