Hawai`i Apiary Program

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Thanks to our supporters:

Annual Bee Survey: Participate in April!

Its time for the whole nation of beekeepers to enter their information in the online BIP survey HERE, until April 30. Aimed at looking for relationships between colony losses and colony management (including disease treatment strategies, supplemental feeding, etc.) and/or other factors that may influence colony health (such as colony location, honey production, and forage type). Your participation in this research is voluntary and your responses will be kept confidential. Thanks to all of the beekeepers in Hawaii who take this online survey each year, you can see Hawaii's participation and results over the years on this interactive map. Learn more about the survey HERE. Help keep Hawaii on the map!

Hawaii's Honey per Hive Ranked 2nd in USA

USDA-National Agricultural Statistics Service tracks honey production and prices, and in the most recent report, Hawaii moved up to 2nd place for honey produced per hive, with a 93lb average! This is no surprise, since Hawaii has year-round forage conditions and a wide variety of blooming plants. Beekeepers on Oahu and Big Island also report that since Varroa arrived, their managed hives have much larger honey crops, likely because those feral bees who might compete for forage are now gone. The report concludes that 2014 Hawaii honey production is 29% higher than last year, with 2,000 more managed colonies (highest since 1987) and with honey prices also increasing, Hawaii's honey industry is now valued at $3.18 million, up from $2.13 million in 2013!

Hawaii Apiary Program Staff: Danielle Downey, Noelani Waters, Lauren Rusert and David Barnes.

Apiary Staff Welcomes Noelani Waters and David Barnes

Hawaii's Apiary Program became permanent at the Hawaii Department of Agriculture in 2013. We now have four staff at HDOA in Hilo, including **Danielle Downey, Lauren Rusert,** and new members Noelani Waters and David Barnes. We are glad to have them and we hope you will meet them soon!

Noe Waters grew up on the Big Island and began beekeeping at UH Hilo 4 years ago. She has a Bachelor's degree in Tropical Plant Science and AgroEcology with a certificate in Beekeeping. At home she builds top-bar hives and keeps 3 hobby colonies; she has a small business selling honey and beeswax-based body butter. In her free time she loves to throw and sell her pottery, sing and play ukulele, cook, hike, and travel. Noe is thrilled to have joined the Apiary Team and looks forward to seeing the program grow and thrive!

David Barnes was born into many generations of Florida beekeeping. In 1996, he took over the family bee business; focusing on floral specific honeys, pollination services and growing bees for sale. In 2001, David accepted a position with the Florida Department of Agriculture Apiary Inspection, working in many aspects of the industry with a large role in their Africanized Bee Program. In 2010 he moved to Hawaii to work at Kona Queen. David's life revolves around honeybees, his wife and dog, but he does love everything outdoors, including hiking, exploring, and anything to do with water.

Hawai`i Apiary Program

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The Varroa mite, the world's most damaging bee pest.

Bee pests across the islands: only Oahu and Big Island have Varroa, and small hive beetle is widespread.

Little Fire Ant baits were tested multiple times in busy apiaries, bees showed no interest.

Update across the Islands: Beekeepers and Bee Pests

How Many Beekeepers? Hawai`i has a Voluntary Beekeeper Registry, which we use to keep in touch with important news (and this newsletter), and give referrals for swarm catching and pollination. If you would like to join the list or update your information, please complete and return this form. We have over 230 registered beekeepers with over 19,000 hives! Here's a list of how many beekeepers have registered across the islands:

Big Island: 109
Maui: 45
Kauai: 35
Oahu: 35
Molokai: 4
Lanai: 1

Varroa: Hawaii's islands have been protected from many common apiary pests for decades. In 2007, the Varroa mite was detected on Oahu, then on Big Island in 2008. NO OTHER ISLANDS have Varroa. Let's keep it that way! The Varroa mite lives on live bees, so we can prevent its spread by not moving bees or used beekeeping equipment between islands (which is also illegal).

Small Hive Beetle: Detected in Hawaii in 2010, SHB has been found throughout the islands. Unlike Varroa, which moves with its bee hosts, SHB can fly several miles, and live over a year, so it may continue to disperse independently.

Get Involved with the HDOA Apiary Program

Here are ways you can use our services or get involved. Contact us for more details!

Join our list of beekeepers, choose optional swarm or pollination referrals.

Volunteer your apiary to sample for the National Survey (all islands– must have 8 colonies), you will get free analysis of viruses, diseases, and pests while representing Hawaii's bees in this National effort.
Volunteer your apiary for pesticide residue testing of pollen (Kauai County project). Results will be kept confidential.

Request an apiary visit, we can talk story and answer questions about management and colony health.

Take our classes (next series at Maui Community College in April). Info HERE.

Colony concerns? Send us bee samples, we can test for pests and disease.

Have mean bees? Send us some in alcohol, we will make sure they're not Africanized.

Email us photos. We can answer your swarm, removal or bee biology questions.

Request a presentation about bees for your event, group or club.

Become a volunteer for the Apiary Program. We have a training event coming up soon on the Big Island!

Will Little Fire Ant Baits Harm Honey Bees?

Little Fire Ants are an invasive species too close to home for many Hawaii residents. If you don't want to share your home with fire ants, you may consider using poison baits to kill them. Rest assured that the baits recommended by the Hawaii Fire Ant Lab, used as directed, are not attractive to honey bees.

The bait products are either in a granular form or in a gel. In both cases the attractants in the bait are a mixture of lipids and proteins – no carbohydrates. The granular baits are on a corn grit carrier to which is added a toxicant and soya oil. The gel baits are an emulsified mixture of corn oil and water with the toxicant and protein, none of which attracts foraging bees.
To confirm, the Apiary team tested both forms of these ant baits in busy apiaries, and they were not attractive to honeybees. Bees forage for sweet nectar in flowers, so be sure not to use baits on a flowering plant, where bees could contact the bait in passing.