

Swarm removal

There are over 98 species of bees in Ireland. There are 97 wild bee species. These include 20 bumblebee species and 77 solitary bee species but there is only one European honey bee (*Apis mellifera mellifera*).

Please see below to identify what type of bee you have and who to approach for help and information.

Our beekeepers are volunteers and can only help in cases of honey bee swarms.

STEP 1: Identifying honey bees

If the insects are **not honey bees**, this part of the website shows you how to recognise other insects and gives some advice on what to do.



Bumblebees

Bumblebees are often confused with honeybees. However they are rounder, larger and furrier and come with a variety of coloured stripes across the end of their tails. Are they in a bird box, under the decking, in the compost?

Bumblebees are important pollinators. Leave the nests alone if possible. They will die out at the end of summer and will cause no further problems. Bumblebees rarely sting or attack people or animals and should therefore not be disturbed. There are 20 different types of native bumblebee, all of which vary in size and colour.

Beekeepers are unable to assist in the removal of bumblebees.



Solitary bees

Are there lots of small bees popping in and out of the wall or very small holes in the ground. Do they have a "reddy/brown" bottom? Are they almost black?

These are solitary bees, of which there are 77 species recorded in Ireland and they pose no threat or harm to you, your family or pets. Solitary bees are important pollinators and should be left alone. Their numbers will decrease over the summer and their nests should be left alone.

Beekeepers are unable to assist in the removal of solitary bees.



Wasps

Is it bright yellow with black stripes? Kilkenny Colours! Very smooth, mainly yellow with black stripes? Is it in the roof of your house? Going into a hole in the ground? Are they coming from a round nest in a tree? Is there a nest in the shed? Do they have a high pitched buzz? Are they after all things sweet? Then these are probably wasps.

Beekeepers are unable to assist in the removal of wasps.



European Hornets

Are they very big with a loud buzz? Are they black and brown with a hint of orange? Living in the roof or shed? Do they have a very big curved tail? These are European Hornets and are valuable pollinators usually found in wooden areas.

Beekeepers are unable to assist in the removal of hornets.



Asian Hornets

Are they dark brown or black with a velvety body? The queen is up to 30mm long and worker up to 25mm long (smaller than the European counterpart). Are the legs yellow at the ends (the European hornet has brown legs)? Do not disturb an active nest. If you suspect you have found an Asian Hornet please send a photo to waterfordbees@gmail.com

Beekeepers are unable to assist in the removal of Asian Hornets.

STEP 2: Still think they are Honey bees?

Honey bees are small and vary in colour from golden brown to almost black.

Does your swarm look like this?



Image courtesy of Tris

If you are looking at these then please contact your local Swarm Collector who will provide appropriate help or advice with your honey bee swarm.