

Protecting Honey Bees

Richard D. Fell, Entomologist, Virginia Tech

The poisoning of honey bees and other beneficial insects by pesticides can be a serious problem. Honey bees provide a valuable service to agriculture because they are the most important pollinators of cultivated crops. They also produce honey and beeswax. Efforts should be made to protect honey bees whenever pesticides are used. The protection of honeybees has become even more critical in recent years because of increased colony loss due to mite parasites and Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD)

Causes of Bee Poisoning

1. Most bee poisoning occurs when insecticides are applied to crops in bloom. This includes crop plants such as sweet corn, which is routinely sprayed when in tassel. Honey bees collect pollen from corn tassels.
2. The application of insecticides to fields with weeds that are in bloom. The spring application of insecticides to alfalfa fields with flowering weeds is a particular problem in Virginia.
3. Drift of toxic sprays or dusts onto adjoining crops or weeds that are in bloom.
4. The contamination of flowering ground-cover crops in orchards when spray applications are made.
5. The contamination of water. This includes water collected by bees for drinking and cooling the hive as well as contact with contaminated water or dew on foliage or flowers.
6. The use of systemic insecticides and the possible contamination of nectar and pollen. This is a concern with the use of neonicotinoid insecticides, such as clothianidin, imidacloprid, and thiamethoxam, although more research is needed.

The most serious problems occur when bees collect contaminated pollen or nectar and carry these materials back to the hive. Insecticidal dusts (particularly Sevin) and encapsulated insecticides are especially dangerous because they adhere to foraging bees and may be collected and stored in the hive with pollen. Such materials can cause serious bee kills within the hive for many months.

Ways to Reduce Bee Poisoning

1. When using pesticides that are hazardous to bees, notify the beekeeper so that he may move or protect his hives.
2. Do not apply insecticides that are toxic to bees to crops in bloom.
3. Use insecticides that are less toxic to bees when such choices are consistent with pest control recommendations (see the table of relative toxicities).
4. Choose the least hazardous formulations when possible. Dusts and encapsulated insecticides are more toxic than sprays of the same material. Wettable powder sprays tend to have a longer residual effect (and are more toxic) than emulsifiable concentrate sprays. Granular applications are usually the safest method of treatment around bees.
5. Avoid drift of toxic sprays onto ground-cover plants, weeds, and crops in nearby fields.
6. Control weeds in fields and avoid direct insecticide applications to flowering weeds whenever possible.
7. If ground-cover plants in orchards are in bloom, mow before spraying.
8. Apply insecticides when bees are not actively foraging, either in the late evening or early morning. This is particularly important with crops such as corn where evening applications avoid many problems since pollen release occurs in the morning. In general, evening applications are least hazardous.
9. Do not apply insecticides when temperatures are expected to be unusually low following treatment. Residues remain toxic to bees for a longer time under such conditions.
10. Avoid direct treatment over colonies.
11. Contact beekeepers with nearby colonies before treatment so that they can move the hives or confine the bees if potential bee losses might occur.

Relative Toxicity of Pesticides to Honey Bees by Laboratory and Field Tests

Group I. Highly Toxic

Severe losses may be expected if these pesticides are used when bees are present at treatment time or within a day **thereafter**.

Abamectin	Baythroid (cyfluthrin)	Decis (decamethrin)	Furadan F (carbofuran)	Nudrin (methomyl)	Sevin (carbaryl) ³
Acramite (bifenazate)	BHC	Delegate, Radiant (spinetoram)	Fury (zeta-cypermethrin)	Orthene (acephate)	Spectracide
Actara, Centric, Platinum, Helix, Cruiser, Adage (thiamethoxam)	Bidrin (dicrotophos)	Denim (emamectin benzoate)	Gardona (tetrachlorvinphos)	Pact (thianitrile)	Steward (indoxacarb)
Address (acephate)	Bux (bufencarb)	Dibrom (naled)	Guard Star (permethrin) ¹	Parathion	Sumithion (fenitrothion)
Admire (imidacloprid)	Capture, Annex, Brigade (bifenthrin)	De-fend, Dimate (dimethoate)	Guthion (azinphos-methyl)	Pay Off (flucythrinate)	Supracide (methidathion)
Advantage	Carzol	Diazinon (spectracide)	Imidan (phosmet)	Phosdrin (mevinphos)	Swat (bonyl)
Afugan (pyrazophos)	Cidial (phenthoate)	Dimecron (phosphamidon)	Karate	Phosphamidon	Synthrin (resmethrin)
Ambush (permethrin)	Clutch (clothianidin)	Dursban, Eradex (chlorpyrifos)	Lannate D (methomyl)	Poncho, Titan, Clutch (clothianidin)	Talstar
Ammo (Fury) (>.025 lb/acre) (cypermethrin)	Commodore (lambda-cyhalothrin)	Ectrin (fenvaterate)	Lindane	Pounce (permethrin)	Tameron (methamidophos)
Apollo (clofentezine)	Comply (fenoxycarb)	Ekamet (etrimphos)	Lorsban (chlorphyrifos)	Proaxis (gamma-cyhalothrin)	Temik (aldicarb)
Arsenicals	Curacron (profenofos)	Endigo	Malathion (Malathion G)	Proclaim (emamectin)	TEPP
Asana (esfenvalerate)	Cygon (dimethoate)	Envidor (spirodiclofen)	Matacil (aminocarb)	Provado (imidacloprid)	Trimax
Avaunt (Advion) (indoxacarb)	Cymbush	EPN	Mesuroil (methiocarb)	Proclaim (emamectin)	Vapona (dichlorvos)
Avid (avermectin)	Cythion (malathion)	Ethyl guthion (azinphos-ethyl)	Methyl parathion	Provado (imidacloprid)	Venom (dinotefuran)
Azodrin (monocrotophos)	Danitol (fenopropathin)	Famphos (famphur)	Monitor (methamidophos)	Pydrin (fenvaterate 0.1 lb/A) ²	Warrior (lambda-cyhalothrin)
Baygon (propxur)	Dasanit (fensulfothion)	Ficam (bendiocarb)	Nemacur P (phenamiphos)	Pyramite	Zectran (mexacarbate)
Baytex (fenthion)	DDVP (dichlorvos)	Folimat	Nexter (pyridaben)	Rebelate (dimethoate)	Zephyr (Agri-Mek) (abamectin)
		Fipronil		Resmethrin	
				Scout (tralomethrin)	

¹Can be applied to ground in front of beehives for the control of small hive beetles.

²Can be applied in the late evening at rate of 0.1 lb/A or less.

³Some formulations of Sevin XLR are rated as moderately toxic.

Group II. Moderately Toxic

These can be used around bees if dosage, timing, and method of application are correct, but should not be applied directly on bees in the field or at the colonies.

Abate (temophos)	Calypso (thiacloprid)	Decis, Battalion (deltamethrin)	Korlan (ronnel)	Oil sprays (superior type)	Systox (demeton)
Acramite (bifenazate)	Carzol (formetanate)	Di-Syston (disulfoton)	Larvin (thiocarb)	Perthane (ethylan)	Trigard (cyromazine)
Agritox (trichloronate)	Chlordane Ciodrin (crotoxyphos)	Dyfonate (fonofos)	Metasystox (demeton-s- methyl)	Pirimor (pirimicarb)	Thimet (phorate) ²
Assail (acetamiprid)	Coumaphos ¹ (Agridip, Asunthol)	Elgetol (dinitrocresol)	Metasystox R (oxydemeton- methyl)	Pyramat	Thionex (endosulfan)
Banol (carbanolate)	Counter (terbufos)	endrin	Metasystox R (oxydemeton- methyl)	Rhonthane (RDE)	Trithion (carbophenothion)
Bolstar (sulprofos)	Croneton (ethiofencarb)	Esteem (pyriproxyfen)	Mocap (ethoprop)	SpinTor (Conserve SC) (Entrust)	Vydate (oxamyl)
		Ethodan (Ethion)		(spinosad)	

¹Checkmite (coumaphos) strip can be used in beehives to treat for varroa mites and small hive beetles.

²Thimet EC should only be applied during late evening.

Group III. Relatively Nontoxic

These can be used around bees with a minimum of injury

Acaraben (chlorobenzilate)	Birlane (chlorfenvinphos)	Dinocap (Karathane)	Kelthane (dicofol)	Pentac (dienochlor)	Smite (sodium azide)
Acarol (bromopropylate)	Calypso (thiacloprid)	Dylox (trichlorfon)	Mavrik (fluvalinate) ¹	Plictran [mitacid] (cyhexatin)	Spur (fluvalinale)
Agri-Mek (avermectin)	Chlorantraniliprole Chloroparacide (chlorbenside)	Ethrel (ethephon)	methoxychlor (Marlate)	Pynamin	Surround (kaolin)
Allethrin	Confirm (tebufenozide)	Esteem (pyriproxyfen)	Mitac (amitraz)	Pyrellin (rotenone/ pyrithrin)	Tedion (tetradifon)
Altosid (methoprene)	Cyd-X (CM granulovirus)	Fujimite (fenpyroximate)	Morestan (oxythioquinox)	pyrethrum (natural)	tetram
Amitraz	Cyrolite	Fulfill (pymetrozine)	Morocide (binapacryl)	rotenone	Tokuthion (prothiophos)
Apollo (clofentezine)	Dasanit G (fensulfothion)	Fundal, Galecron (chlordimeform)	Murvesco (fenson)	ryania	Torak (dialifor)
Aza-direct (azadirachtin)	Delnav (dioxathion)	<i>Heliothis polyhe-</i> <i>drosis</i> virus	Neemix (Align) (azadirachtin)	Rynaxypyr (chlorantranilip- role)	Trigard (cyromazine)
Baam (amitraz)	Demize (D-Limonene)	Intrepid (methoxyfenozide)	Neotran	sabadilla	Vendex (fenbutatin oxide)
<i>Bacillus</i> <i>thuringiensis</i>	Dessin (dinobuton)	Isomate	nicotine	Saphos (menazon)	Zeal (etoxazole)
(Accoate, Biotrol, Dipel, Thuricide)	Dimilin (diflubenzuron)	Kanemite (acequinocyl)	Omite (propargite)	Savey (hexythiazox)	
			Ovotran (ovex)		

¹Fluvalinate is used in Apistan strips to treat beehives for varroa mites. It is illegal to use Mavrik in hives.

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Fungicides

As a general rule, fungicides are safe to use around honey bees.

Afugan (pyrazophos)	copper oxychloride sulfate	Dithane D-14 (nabam)	Hinosan (edifenphos)	Mylone (dazomet)	Syllit (dodine)
Arasan (thiram)	copper sulfate cupric hydroxide (Kocide)	Dithane M (maneb, manzeb)	Indar (butrizol)	Phygon (dichlone)	Terraguard ¹ , Procure (triflumizole)
Bayleton (triadimefon)	Cyprix (dodine)	Dithane Z (zineb)	Karathane Lesan (fenaminosulf)	Plantvax (oxycarboxin)	Thiram
Benlate (benomyl)	Daconil (chlorothalonil)	Du-Ter (fentin hydroxide)	Maneb	Polyram (metriam)	Thylate
bordeaux mixture		Dyrene (anilazine)	Mancozeb	Ridomil	Vitavax (carboxin)
Bravo (chlorothalonil)	Dessin (dinobuton)	ferbam	Morestan (oxythioquinox)	Rovral (iprodione) ²	Zerlate (Ziram)
Captan copper oxides	Difolatan (captafol)	Glyodin	Morocide (binapaeryl)	sulfur	Zineb

¹ May increase the toxicity of neonicotinoid insecticides to honeybees if used together.

² May cause loss of honeybee larvae. Use with caution where bees are foraging.

Herbicides, Defoliants and Dessicants

2,4-D	Basagran (bentazon)	DSMA	Hoelon (diclofop-methyl)	Mylone (dazomet)	Ronstar (oxadiazon)
2,4-DB		Dual (metolachlor)	Hyvar (bromacil)	Nortron (ethofumesate)	Sancap (dipropetryn)
2,4-DP (dichlorprop)	Betanal AM (bentalex)	Endothall (endothall)	IPC (propham)	Paarlan (isopropalin)	Sencor (metribuzin)
Alachlor	Bladex (cyanazine)	Eptam	Karmex (diuron)	paraquat	Sinbar (terbacil)
Alanap (naptalam)	Blazer (acifluorfen)	Evik (ametryn)	Kerb (proamide)	Pendimethalin (Prowl)	Surflan (oryzalin)
Alopex (clofop-isobutyl)	cacodylic acid	Evital (norflurazon)	Lasso (alachlor)	Phenmedipham (Betanal)	Sutan (butylate)
Amiben (chloramben)	Cambilene (2,3,6-TBA)	Exhalt 800	Lorox (linuron)	Pramitol (prometone)	Telvar (monuran)
Amitrol	Caparol (prometryn)	Folex (desmedipham)	MCPA	Princep (simazine)	Tolban (profluralin)
Ammate	Chloro-IPC (chlorpropham)	Garlon (triclopyr)	Methar, DSMA	Probe (methazole)	Tordon (picloram)
Atrex (atrazine)	Cotoran (fluometuron)	Glyphosate	Milogard (propazine)	Prowl (pendimethalin)	Treflan (trifluralin)
Avenge (difenzoquat)	Daconate (MSMA)	Gramoxone (paraquat)	Modown (bitenox)	Ramrod (propachlor)	Vegadex
Balan (benefin)	dalapon	Herbisan (EXD)	MSMA	Randox	Zorial (norflurazon)
Banvel (dicamba)	diquat				