



Certified Best Practices for Sustainably Sourcing and Managing Orchard Bees

Harvesting/Propagation Guidelines

Propagation in Controlled Rural/Urban areas

Overview

A rural/urban propagation setting implies less land per owner and it is more likely to have dwellings, compared to areas considered wild open lands. For propagating bees, clean populations can be released in open rural areas like private farms or even urban/suburban settings such as backyards. With nesting boxes or other nesting structures provided. Over time the bee population should increase.

Environment

Bees should be released only in an environment that is suitable for survival and nesting with adequate pollen, mud, and nesting sites. Care should be taken during site selection to avoid proximity to areas that may be sprayed with pesticides during adult flight.

Sustainability

Bees best suited for successful reproduction in an area are those that originated from that area and are therefore locally adapted to the climate and seasonality. Released bees are allowed to disperse throughout the nesting environment. Annual cleaning of the bee stock before re-releasing 10-50% of nesting at propagation sites is necessary to continue the ability to propagate a population. This method can be very successful, because urban and suburban environments tend to have abundant plants with extended bloom and water (for mud) due to landscaping practices. However, there is a degree of control lost as the bees can visit many properties, each managed differently. If there is significant bycatch (non-target bee species and wasps), these insects should also be released back into similar environments the following year (after cleaning the nests, just as for the target bee species).

Permission

Permission to place bees and nesting structures on the property should always be gained before any action is taken.

Pollinating Orchards Successfully

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