

# Harmony Hollow Apiaries / Birds and the Bees Apiary

## Management Plan for Honeybees

**This management plan may be added to property owner's personal land management plan.**

Honeybees (*apis mellifera*) are one of agriculture's most important resources for pollinating agricultural plants.

In addition to family or commercial food plots or gardens, it is highly recommended that open areas be seeded with pollinator-friendly crops by the property owner. For a continuous food supply, a rolling progression of blooms is best – and will be able to provide a nectar (carbohydrate) and pollen (protein) source through the summer when many areas have finished their bloom progression.

Samples of over-crop plants that are beneficial are: Crimson Clover (NOT Red Clover), White Clover, Silver River Sweet Clover (Texas A&M developed as a rust-resistant crop – Available at Turner Seed in Breckenridge, Tx), sesame, alfalfa (if left to flower), canola, wildflower mix (available at seed suppliers such as Native American Seed's "Bee Happy Mix"). Bee Balm (monarda or horsemint), hairy (purple) vetch, and buckwheat are also good producers for bees.

Pollinator wildflower mixes are available from companies such as:

Turner Seed (Breckenridge TX)	<a href="https://www.turnerseed.com">https://www.turnerseed.com</a>
Native American Seed Co.	<a href="https://www.seedsource.com">https://www.seedsource.com</a>
Applewood Seed Company	<a href="https://www.applewoodseed.com/">https://www.applewoodseed.com/</a>
American Meadows	<a href="https://www.americanmeadows.com">https://www.americanmeadows.com</a>
Bulk Seed Store	<a href="https://www.bulkseedstore.com">https://www.bulkseedstore.com</a>

and Google turns up many other suppliers as well.

**Beneficial trees include:** Chinese Tallow (Texas' largest honey producer!), Vitex, Locust, Black Locust, Honey Locust, Desert Willow, Maple, Linden, Basswood, Mesquite, Golden Rain Tree, Privet (aka Chinese Privet), Ligustrum, and many more.

The surrounding 18,000 acres (3 mile radius) around the apiary is the theoretical range of a colony. What your neighbors do can also affect the bees. The closest half-mile is the most important.

Harmony Hollow's commitment to your management plan includes a minimum of hive checks every 6-8 weeks - to check the health and strength of the colonies that are being hosted on your property. Checks and maintenance will be by Rex Smith with Harmony Hollow Apiary or Laura Winters ( Birds and the Bees Apiary).

**Checks will be made for:**

Queen presence (freshly laid eggs or visual sighting of the queen)

Supply of nectar (carbohydrate)

Supply of pollen (protein to feed larvae)

Colony behavior

Colony health and growth

Mite checks and evaluation / treatment

Swarm Prevention

and more...

Understand also, that honey is not the only commercial product of the hive. Many times land is used for producing more colonies from host colonies. Nucleus colonies, queen production and pollen collection are also commercial-value items produced by honeybees in agricultural use. Our focus is on the care and survival of the livestock (honeybees) – so understand that there is never an expectation or promise of a honey harvest in any given year.

**Pesticides:** Herbicides and pesticides can both affect a colony by poisoning. If any are applied on the property, 14 days notice is required so that colonies can be removed during the application and during the time the poisons are effective. As outlined in the maintenance agreement, death of colony(s) by poisoning is not covered in the management by Harmony Hollow Apiary – and results in a cost to replace at a value per colony outlined in the maintenance agreement.

**Theft / Vandalism:** Theft and vandalism of beehives is a specified crime in Texas as of our 2022 legislative session. As with loss to pesticide use - hives lost to theft or vandalism are not covered under replacement – and are to be replaced at the cost per colony outlined in the maintenance agreement.

**Other livestock:** If other livestock such as horses, cattle, sheep, or goats are present – a separation fence will need to be erected around the hives to prevent damage or knocking over by the other livestock. This can be as simple as t-posts with a wire fence attached (or whatever is needed to keep the livestock from harming the bee hives) Sample Fence seen here: <http://www.bohemianutopia.com/?p=2931>

**Water:** Bees, like any other animal need access to water. Ponds, lakes, standing water, creeks, stock tanks, pools (saltwater and chlorinated), grey water, etc all provide water sources for bees. It is preferred that a natural water source away from human activity be used – however the bees will use what they deem fittest for their needs. It is recommended that their water source be within a quarter-mile of the hives. Closer is better. Also understand – that bees can and will use swimming pool water as a source.

**Apiary Registration:** As of 1 Sept 2023, Texas Apiary Inspection Service will no longer process “Apiary Registrations” – that has been changed in the last legislative session to “Beekeeper Registration”. The property owner can register as “the beekeeper”, or the beekeeper (if hired) can register as “the beekeeper” for the property. I personally register annually – and can list your property under my registration. The appraisal district MAY have upcoming guidelines listing who THEY want to see listed (either property owner, or hired beekeeper). That registration is NO LONGER FREE. It is now \$35 per year.

<https://txbeeinspection.tamu.edu/>

Farm & Livestock Activity signage is also placed at or near an entry gate to the property for colonies owned by Harmony Hollow. This used to be known as the Equine Law in Texas, and now covers other livestock with potential unpredictable behavior.

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For hired maintenance of HHA or Birds & The Bees hives – our apiary brand (ID) will be stenciled on the boxes ( TX 1-113-687 or 1-113-823)

If you own the hives – TAIS can assign you a brand ID for \$10 (as of 2023) that you can then mark/identify your hives with. Alternatively – they can be marked with your own identifier (name / phone number) is acceptable according to personal conversation with TAIS.

**Placement and management of hives is NOT a guarantee that your appraisal district will approve ag valuation for your property.**

Call **Harmony Hollow Apiaries** at **469-251-2BEE (2233)** with any questions.