

Sweet Pines Apiary

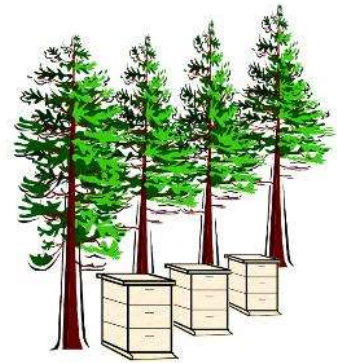
West Michigan Honeybees and Beekeeping Education

WANTED- SITES FOR HONEYBEES

One Hundred Square Feet is Sufficient.

They range out over two miles!

Rent paid in Honey!



SWEET PINES APIARY

Dear Landowner,

I am a beekeeper with over 30 years' experience keeping bees . I regularly speak about honeybees and beekeeping at schools, libraries, and nature centers. I try to locate my bees in places where: 1, they can do well, 2, it is convenient for me in travel for service, and 3, about three to four miles apart. Your area is of interest to me so I would like to investigate the possibility of placing some bees on your property. I would like to be sure that we have a common understanding before we get too far and have conflict. There are a few things you need to understand about bees to avoid disagreement later.

Honeybees provide pollination for local fruits and flowers at the same time they produce honey for themselves, and hopefully some for me. They need a spot to catch the morning sun (to get them up and moving) but a little afternoon shade is fine to help them keep cool in summer. They need a fresh water source within 1/4 mile but I prefer to have a fresh water source within a hundred yards to prevent trouble with neighbors by having bees visit their pool. I put out buckets of water if none is available through another source. Bees do sting but normally only when they perceive an attack on their home. This generally requires some disturbance of the hives themselves but can occur from running a lawn mower within ten feet of the hive entrance.

Bees are living things. They are susceptible to various poisons. So, please, notify me at least a week in advance if you are having your trees or yard sprayed. I would also like the phone number and name of the sprayer so I can contact him to find out exactly what he will be spraying, and the time of day of the application.

I would like to have an agreement that would allow me to have up to ten full-sized colonies on your property. I will generally keep between five and ten full-sized colonies there because maintaining less than five colonies in a location is hardly worth the travel time to the yard and ten colonies is about the limit for agriculture or suburban environments . A colony is one family of bees in a stack of boxes. I raise and sell nucleus colonies for sale to other beekeepers (also used for mating queens that I raise) and consider four small nucleus colonies equivalent to a single full-sized colony. The family consists of one queen, maybe a couple thousand drones (males), and several thousand workers (females).

The agreement to keep bees on the property should be on a yearly basis because of the effort required moving them. If you suddenly decide to ask me to remove them, I will try to do so as quickly as possible but please allow me two weeks to coordinate the move due to weather and schedule.

I will check the yard frequently to assure the hives have not been damaged by storm or vandals but please notify me if you notice something wrong. I manage my hives to minimize swarming, which is the bees' method of reproducing colonies but we don't know enough about them to guarantee that it won't happen. Swarming is generally not a threat to people because the bees are quite docile during swarming. I will place bait boxes around the apiary to try to trap any swarms that are in the area, either my own or locals. Please call me if you notice bees hanging in a cluster away from the hives.

I will require free access to the yard to properly care for the bees so that they don't become a problem. This includes moving, inspecting, and checking for water supply. I sell bees so that is just one reason I may be moving bees in and out of your yard. Moving bees generally is done at night, when they are all at home. If there is going to be a problem or restriction, lets discuss it up front, although, if a problem arises, I'll try to adjust accordingly. Vehicle access to the yard is nice but not required if the distance from vehicle access is less than 100 feet and the intervening ground is not too rough.

My bees are good tenants. They pay their rent in honey. I generally extract in mid summer with a yield of thirty to sixty pounds per hive in good years, zero in poor years. I will pay you 5 lbs of honey per year for the use of the yard area. This is not a lot economically, but I hope you will find the experience rewarding in other ways, as I do.

If you would like to pursue the agreement or have any questions, please give me a call. Depending on how you received this letter, I may or may not have your phone number. If I don't hear from you, this may be the last you hear from me. Please consider this opportunity to glimpse a different aspect of the world around you. My girls really do make good neighbors.

Thank you,

Raymond J. Lackey, Tianca, LLC, dba Sweet Pines Apiary

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P.S. If this is not of interest to you, can you recommend someone in the area who might be interested in such an opportunity?