

The following article is from Boca Raton News, 20 March 2007. There are a number of errors/misquotes and information left out.

I am adding corrections IN BLUE.

–Dr. John Warner, PhD entomology

Boca Raton News (FL)

March 20, 2007

Bee expert warns of finding nearly pure Africanized strain in Boca

Dale M. King
CITY EDITOR

The sound of a buzzing swarm of **bees** can be ominous, even frightening to those who are allergic.

A **bee** expert and operator of a pest control company with locations in Boca Raton and surrounding communities is warning that nearly pure Africanized **bees** have been found in the area. **[There is only 1 location for Shalom Pest Control, Inc., and it is in Boca Raton]**

Individually, said Dr. John Warner, operator of Shalom Pest Control who has Ph. D. from the University of Florida in entomology, the Africanized **bee** is no more dangerous than the regular honeybee. In fact, it is smaller, he said, and delivers a sting with a little less venom.

It's the behavior of the Africanized **bee** that's worrisome, he said. The **bees** are much more aggressive, and attack in swarms. Such swarms have been responsible for the death of several pets and farm animals in the area.

And while he admits it would take about 1,500 stings from Africanized **bees** to kill a human being, the multitude of possible stings could cause serious injury. **[I also said that if a person is allergic to bee venom, he could die from only 1 sting.]**

Some have died.

He said 18 people have died as a result of attacks by the **bees** – none in Florida. Most were in the Texas area, where the **bees** first found the way into the U.S. **[I never said the approx. 18 deaths occurred in the Texas area.]**

In 1956, Dr. Warner said, a Brazilian researcher brought pure African **bees** back to his home country and bred them with European honeybees. When he released them, they headed north, arriving in Texas around 1990 and Florida in 1992, he said. **[The researcher, Dr Warwick E. Kerr from Brazil, did not release the African queens**

bees. A visitor to the research center did so accidentally.]

In the past, Dr. Warner said, he received an average of two **bee** calls a year. “In 2006, I got a lot more,” he said. And this year, the number is even larger.

He said the city of Boca Raton hired him to remove nests from four locations –the parking lot at City Hall, at the Municipal Golf Course, at Hillsboro-El Rio Park and at the Gumbo Limbo Nature Center. **[The City of Boca hired me to do 5 sites between December 2006 and March 2007. Spanish River Park also had bees.]**

And that is just for the city. It doesn’t count calls from homeowners vexed by the aggressive strain of **bees**. “And I have gotten a number of calls,” he said.

Residents calling

Dr. Warner also removed a nest near a preschool in Cooper City, he said.

He said that 100 percent of the **bees** he has removed from a coverage area that extends from South Palm Beach County to Northern Broward County have been 99.99 percent Africanized. **[The area covered by Shalom Pest Control is all of Palm Beach and Broward Counties.]**

When the Africanized **bees** breed with the European honeybees, they create hybrids that show aggressive behavior. And while honeybees breed only once a year, the doctor said, the Africanized **bees** breed about 10 times a year. **[Well, Africanized bees ARE hybrids. European bees tend to swarm once per year or once in two years. Africanized bees swarm about 10 times per year. The swarms are smaller and may enter small spaces, such as a water meter box. European swarms will have 1 queen and several thousand workers, while Africanized bee swarms may have 10 queens. These are some of the reasons why they are spreading so fast in south Florida. Add to these facts our warm weather and lack of the parasites, predators, and pathogens that the original African bees had in Africa, and you might consider that our area is a paradise for these bees. They will probably continue to spread.]**

He said anyone who sees **bees** flying around should seek safety inside a building. They should run – and not flail their arms – for the movement may attract **bees**.

He suggested those with allergies to **bee** stings get a syringe of antidote from a doctor and keep it with them. **[No, I said that if people are allergic to bee stings, they should consult their doctor. The doctor may suggest that they carry an antidote.]**

Dr. Warner is also encouraging communities to put **bee** veils in emergency vehicles.