

Writer's Model

Report of Information

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The Invasion of the Killer Bees

They were once the subject of science fiction movies. Now that they have traveled over five thousand miles and left more than one thousand deaths in their wake, Africanized or “killer” honeybees are a frightening reality to people from South America to Nevada. Today, scientists warn that the bees are here to stay and urge people to learn how to coexist with these sometimes hostile creatures.

Africanized honeybees are very different from the native honeybees that live in the United States. Native bees, also called European honeybees, live mostly in hives and hollow trees. They have few enemies and are usually gentle. Africanized honeybees build nests in the open and protect them fiercely.

Killer bees are extremely nervous, and they are also fighters. Native bees chase people for a few yards when they are bothered. Africanized bees, however, will chase an intruder for as far as half a mile. Their poison is not different from the poison of ordinary bees, but they come after people in a big swarm, sometimes leaving their victims with more than one thousand stings. According to one expert, a human can't survive more than six stings per pound of body weight (Horiuchi).

The invasion of the killer bees began in 1956, when a Brazilian scientist imported seventy-five queen bees from Africa. He wanted to crossbreed them with peaceful European bees. Twenty-six of these African bees accidentally escaped in 1957. The descendants of the African bees soon became known as “killer” bees. They spread throughout South America, Central America, and Mexico, killing more than one thousand people along the way.

In the early 1990s, the bees crossed into the United States. Now, killer bees are in Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, California, and Nevada. Since 1990, Africanized bees in the United States have killed at least six people and have attacked hundreds of people and animals (Horiuchi). The bees are a growing

threat in places like Las Vegas, Nevada, where an elderly man was attacked in 2000 (Schoenmann).

Some people think that killer bees will become more peaceful as they migrate north into cooler weather. While we wait to see if that will happen, scientists are exploring other methods to tame the bees, such as crossbreeding. One reason crossbreeding might not be successful, however, is that the Africanized queen bee takes less time to hatch than her European cousins do. The first queen to hatch destroys the unborn European queens (Schoenmann). The latest hope for taming killer bees lies in genetic research. Scientists believe they have discovered the bees' "mean gene" and are working to use this knowledge to produce gentler bees (McDonald).

In the meantime, people visiting or living in areas with killer bees should learn how to protect themselves. In an interview, Texas beekeeper Ann Hardy had some advice about preparing for killer bees. She pointed out that people in South America have learned how to deal with Africanized bees, and that following their example will help reduce risk.

According to Hardy, there are several things you should do if you meet a swarm of killer bees. First, run as far and as fast as you can, hide behind things that block the bees' vision, and seek shelter inside a house. After you are safe, you should call the fire department. Hardy also said that it's wise to protect your head and face with clothing or with your arms. Do not slap at the bees; that increases their fury. Do not dive into water; Africanized bees often wait for their victims to resurface.

Killer bees are a reality in the United States today, and they are spreading north, east, and west. How far they will spread is not known. Whether cooler climates and mating with native bees will calm them is also not known. What is known is that, while scientists work toward "taming" Africanized honeybees, you would be wise to learn how to protect yourself from these aggressive insects.

Works Cited

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Definition

A **report of information** presents research on a topic and answers the questions *Who? What? When? Where? Why?* and *How?* A good report can answer a writer's own questions about a topic as well as the questions readers might have.

Many reports of information use the structure illustrated in the framework below. Print this framework and use it as a guide when you write your own report.

