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Don't Bee Afraid: Concord Bees Not Africanized

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Test results requested by the Mt. Diablo Beekeepers Association (MDBA) to determine the type of bees involved in the May 13 Concord bee incident showed no evidence of Africanized Honey Bee ancestry. The bees were identified as European Honey Bees.

Volunteers with the Mt. Diablo Beekeepers Association collected specimens of the dead bees on Hitchcock Road in Concord and sent them to two separate testing facilities:

North Carolina State University, Queen and Disease Clinic, in Raleigh, NC; and

The California Department of Food and Agriculture in Sacramento, CA.

Both testing facilities used mitotyping analysis to determine the maternal origin of the colony. They found that the mitotype of the bee specimens tested showed European Honey Bee descent and made an overall assessment that the bees were European Honey Bees.

"The overly defensive behavior of the Concord bees was an isolated incident," says MDBA president Judy Weatherly. "We are relieved that no evidence of the Africanized Honey Bee was found in the lab tests. We want people in the Bay Area to know that honeybees are not a threat to public safety. Rather, they continue to need our protection."

The swarm season, a natural phenomenon when masses of honeybees leave their old hives in search of a new home, is drawing to a close. Right now, honeybees are out during the day foraging for nectar and pollen, a normal activity that continues until wintertime.

For information about the MDBA, go to www.diablobees.org

For information about honeybees, go to www.beeinformed.org.

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