

Africanized Honey Bees Fatality File

40,000 'Killer Bees' Sting Texas Man to Death

A hive of approximately **40,000 Africanized honeybees killed a farmer near Waco, Texas**, on Saturday, after he drove past their hive on a tractor.

The victim was identified Monday as Larry Goodwin of Moody, Texas, the Waco Herald-Tribune reports. McLennan County Chief Sheriff's Deputy Matt Cawthon told the paper that Goodwin bumped into an unused chicken coop where the hive was living, prompting them to give chase.

Goodwin dashed 50 feet to a garden hose, which he attempted to use to dispel the bees. A woman identified by KCEN-TV as a neighbor attempted to help, but was stung repeatedly, as were volunteer firefighters who responded.

Allen Miller was called to remove the bees from Goodwin's farm. Miller, the owner of Bees Be Gone, told U.S. News he typically exterminates six hives of Africanized bees per year. In the past 30 days alone, he said, he's exterminated six hives.

"If this is a sign of things to come I'm getting out of this business," Miller said. "I've been seeing a whole lot more."

Miller kills the bees where he finds them, using various insecticides that are safe for humans 2 hours after application. "I have a 90-day warranty, so I'm real serious," he said. When they cover his body and sting through his gloves and clothing, Miller retreats to his car and turns on the air conditioning, which causes the bees to flee.

"The killer bees are the only ones that give me any problem,"

Miller said, "because they can get in my gloves and in my pants. It's amazing what killer bees can do. With killer bees, all 100 percent [of the hive] think they're supposed to save the queen and be killers. They terrify people out of their gourds because there are so many of them."

Miller gets stung during most Africanized bee exterminations. For the killers, he takes off his "sissy gloves" and puts on heavier ones. "I've got a full suit, but I usually don't use it because it's so hot," he said, opting for a veiled hat suit and heavyweight jeans.

He didn't get stung on Saturday, which he attributes to a ferocious surprise-attack on the bee colony. "I laid it on, I did not give them an equal chance," he said.

Family members said the 62-year-old victim's skin was entirely covered by red sting marks, KCEN-TV reports.

Africanized honeybees, popularly known as "killer bees," are similar to farm-raised honeybees used to pollinate plants and make honey. The bees look similar and have "almost identical" venom in individual stings, according to an Ohio State University fact sheet. The Africanized bees, however, are notably more aggressive. Entire hives pursue perceived attackers, often killing their target.