

## RESIDENTS REPORTING SWARMS

Most every spring we receive calls from excited residents who see the air filled with thousands of swarming honey bees or clumps of them in a tree, bush or attached to an object in their yard. This is the way that a honey bee hive or colony divides, and is a fascinating natural phenomenon that normally poses little danger to the public. When new queens are produced, usually in the spring, the old queen will often leave the original colony with thousands of workers, and will find a resting place while a few dozen scout workers look for a new home. When a scout finds an appropriate void or cavity, she will do a waggle dance which amazingly describes how to find the new location, and the swarm follows.

The swarms usually are well fed with honey and not aggressive (or rather defensive) at this time, as they are not protecting honey or brood combs, and only remain for a few hours or couple of days in their temporary resting place. The resident can either wait for them to leave or call a beekeeper, especially if they start to build combs and decide to stay. They are much prized by beekeepers, which will usually collect them for free, particularly in the spring. Call us if you would like a list of beekeepers.

Santa Cruz County Mosquito and Vector Control 454-2590

