

Warm winter, monsoon rain leading to bee attacks in Arizona

August 5 2017

Two deadly bee attacks in the past week in the Tucson area likely are the result of a warm winter and recent monsoon rain, experts said Friday.

"Rain makes flowers makes bees," said Dr. Steven Thoenes, owner of Beemaster Inc., a pest control company in Tucson. "There were no freezes last winter to knock them down. We're seeing a lot of big colonies now, and the bees are big and nasty."

On Monday, a 49-year-old landscaper died after being attacked and stung while he was at a home outside of Tucson. Two days later, a 75-year-old Rio Rico man who was allergic to bees died after being stung more than 100 times while fishing at a pond.

A 53-year-old landscaper is being treated at a Tucson hospital after being attacked by a swarm of bees Thursday while trimming a tree at a Tubac golf resort.

The start of a concert by Matchbox Twenty was delayed by more than 90 minutes Thursday night after a bee swarm settled into the reserved seating area at a Tucson amphitheater.

Seventy percent of all bee attacks in Arizona involve landscapers and hives being disturbed, according to Thoenes, who said he has been studying bees for 46 years and owned his pest control business for 25 years.

The bloom of flowers means a lot more food for bees, and "more [bees](#) mean a lot bigger colonies," said Justin Schmidt, a scientist with the Department of Entomology at the University of Arizona. "And that's when you have to be especially alert so you don't get into trouble."

© 2017 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

Citation: Warm winter, monsoon rain leading to bee attacks in Arizona (2017, August 5)
retrieved 11 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2017-08-winter-monsoon-bee-arizona.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.