

MONTHLY SAFETY BLAST

BITES AND STINGS AVOIDANCE



Summer is here, along with countless critters that bite and sting. The southwest United States is home to a wide assortment of bees, scorpions, snakes and spiders who use poisons to defend themselves. The treatment for bites and stings varies depending on the critter, but we can all agree that it is better to avoid the encounter altogether. Consider the following strategies to avoid catching one of these southern residents on their bad side.

Bees

- Stay clear of well established hives, wild or commercial. Commercial hives usually look like white boxes and are clustered in fields near a pollen sources.
- Be careful around hollow trees, rock crevices, or other sheltered locations.
- Avoid old or abandoned buildings, sheds and vehicles.
- Old upholstery is an ideal bumblebee habitat. Be careful when moving pieces that have been outside.
- Do not use heavily scented soaps, perfumes or colognes.



Scorpions

- Wear gloves when working outside or in barns and storage buildings.
- Be observant while hand harvesting or gardening.
- Be cautious when moving rocks, firewood, lumber and old boxes. Scorpions frequently nest under bark or in other concealed locations.
- Do not leave clothing or bedding on the floor and always shake these items before use. Scorpions are common in houses and near new construction sites.

Snakes

- Wear long pants and boots.
- Watch where you sit or place your hands and feet.
- Do not reach into spaces you cannot see.
- Be very cautious walking through high grass or rocky areas.
- Be observant as you move firewood, lumber or other building materials.
- Step on fallen logs, not over them.
- Examine the ground around bodies of water.
- Be particularly aware at night when snakes are more active.
- If you see or hear a snake, back away. Snakes can strike about 1/3 of their body length.

Spiders

- Wear gloves when working outside or in barns and storage buildings.
- Never reach into areas you cannot see.
- Exercise caution when moving rocks or wood.
- Be careful in attics, crawl spaces, basements and closets.
- Look carefully into corners and crevices of buildings, porches or boxes.
- Use a stick to sweep under the seat of outdoor toilets to dislodge venomous guests.

Resources:

- Bites, Stings and Venomous Things Tip Booklet (pdf)
<http://www.swagcenter.org/resourcesvideos.asp>
- Texas Bites
https://agrilifebookstore.org/publications_details.cfm?whichpublication=1585&orderby=pubnumber&SIMPLESEARCH=venomous&criteriastring=SIMPLESEARCH%3Dvenomous
- Bug Bites & Stings
http://www.medicinenet.com/bug_bites_and_stings/article.htm