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ARIZONA LANDSCAPE
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Bees & Insects

Insects and Snakes

What appears docile when collecting pollen from flowers can be downright terrifying if you happen to disturb the hive. Africanized Honey Bees, present in Arizona since 1993, have tendencies to be more aggressive in protecting their colony than the common honey bee especially during warmer temperatures and periods of long drought. Avoidance is the best policy. If you're not that lucky, move out of the area quickly. Do not swat at the bees which only makes them more defensive. Cover your head and face with anything available including your shirt. Do not jump into a pool or other body of water. The bees will likely wait to attack longer than you can hold your breath under water.

Insect stings can be treated without medical attention unless the person suffers an allergic reaction. The first step to treating an insect sting is to remove the stinger. This can be done by using a straight edge to scrape off the stinger or by using tweezers to pull it out. If you use tweezers to remove the stinger, use extreme caution to not puncture the protruding venom sac. After the stinger has been removed, a cold pack can be used during the first 24 hours to suppress pain and swelling. Following the first 24 hours, heat should be applied if pain or swelling persist.

Those with severe allergies to insect stings should consult a physician about carrying a prescription medical kit. The kit contains medicine and instructions to be used if the person is stung. If the kit is used, the victim still must receive medical attention. Call for help or take them to the nearest hospital.

Snake Bites

If you are bitten by a snake, seek medical attention immediately and try to describe the size and color of the snake to the doctor. This can help the doctor determine whether or not the snake was poisonous. Never cut, suck or apply cold packs to snake bites.



Mammals

Be aware of animals such as squirrels or bats that may be in trees or bushes and startle you during work. Also, be cautious of animals such as rats, skunks and raccoons that could be rabid.

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