



Dwarf Honey Bees

Apis florea, *A. andreniformis*

Dwarf bees; a 'host' of problems



ABOUT

Dwarf honey bees are the most common honey bees throughout tropical Asia. There are two main species of dwarf honey bees, the Red dwarf honey bee, *Apis florea*, and the Black dwarf honey bee, *Apis andreniformis*.

Both the Red and the Black dwarf honey bee look similar in appearance with the Red dwarf honey bee being red/brown with distinct white and black bands on the abdomen of the bee. The Black dwarf honey bee is blacker in colour as its name suggests.

The worker dwarf honey bee generally has a body length between 7-10mm. Dwarf honey bee colonies are generally very small in size containing only a few thousand insects to a single colony. Dwarf honey bee colonies often nest on branches of trees and other vegetation.

Dwarf honey bees have not been domesticated for honey production nor pollination services in Asia.

The dwarf honey bee species pose a major risk to the Australian honey bee industry due to their ability to 'host' exotic parasitic mites (also known as *Eugarra* mites) that nests of bees may carry.

Eugarra are also found on bees in swarms and nests as can be seen by a recent interception where the *Eugarra sinhai* were found on bees in *Apis florea* swarms.

Dwarf honey bees have also been found with *Tropilaelaps* mites. This species of mite has been observed on Red dwarf honey bee colonies and are concerningly capable of 'jumping host' to European honey bee colonies.

The dwarf honey bee species and the mites such as *Tropilaelaps* and *Eugarra* mites are not currently present in Australia.



Above: Dwarf honey bee comparison. On the left a European honey bee, *Apis mellifera* on the right Red dwarf honey bee, *Apis florea*. Image: WA DPIRD Agriculture and Food agric.wa.gov.au. Top Left: Red dwarf honey bees with Queen.. Image: Zachary Huang, Michigan State University bees.msu.edu, BeeAware.org.au.

TAKE ACTION

If you see or suspect the presence of dwarf honey bees in Australia, report the pest IMMEDIATELY.

CONTACT

Report all suspect sightings to: Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23 or Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Scan the QR Code or click here for more information about dwarf honey bees from the BeeAware website.



Early detection is essential to ensure any exotic bees entering Australia are contained