Swarm Collectors Protocol

BBKA Swarm Collectors List
The on line facility at www.bbka.org.uk is a list of BBKA/Association members who are willing to be contacted by members of the general public in the event of them having a problem with a swarm of honey bees.

As the beekeeper attending a swarm problem, they represent both their Association and therefore the BBKA, this is why only BBKA members are included on the bbka.org.uk swarm collectors list It is a condition of being accepted on this swarm collection list that the beekeeper will not collect swarms to sell for personal financial gain.

The facility can be used by any member of the general public, using the post-code locator. On inputting their post code into the “find a collectors” part of the website, the system displays the contact details of beekeepers within a ten mile radius of their stated postcode who are able and willing to collect honey bees. The only personal contact details displayed are the beekeepers name and their preferred contact telephone number.

This protocol is intended to identify the necessary knowledge and standards, which are felt to be required of any beekeeper who undertakes this task on behalf of their Association:

CONSIDERATIONS:
Dealing with a swarm of honey bees can be a difficult task. It is therefore recommended that new or inexperienced beekeepers should not undertake this work until they have received appropriate training within their Association and gained sufficient knowledge and experience of swarm collecting.

Telephone calls from the public can relate to all flying insects and not just honey bees i.e. wasps, bumble bees, solitary bees etc so the beekeeper must know what advice to provide should the reported problem not be honey bee related. Members of the public are generally concerned about swarms of honey bees and the beekeeper must be able and confident to deal with the situation and maintain a safe working environment.

As a member of any swarm collecting system, it is expected that a beekeeper whose name is on the collectors list will remain on the list for the whole of the season. If a beekeeper accepts a “swarm call”, the beekeeper then owns the problem until it has either been resolved or they pass to a fellow beekeeper to resolve i.e. it must not be ignored.

BBKA Insurance is invalid if the swarm collection is done for commercial gain.

RECOMMENDED PERSON:
A Swarm Collector must be a beekeeper with experience of bees and beekeeping. Be aware of, and be able to assess the potential dangers and risks associated with swarm collecting to themselves, the public and property and deal with them appropriately. Have received training & experience of collecting a swarm together with an experienced beekeeper; who will have mentored the beekeeper in the task to ensure that the beekeeper is able to undertake the task correctly and safely. They should be aware of the public liability insurance restrictions associated with their membership, i.e. whilst the beekeeper can request payment of expenses associated with the work or a donation to their Association, the beekeeper cannot:

- Undertake the work for commercial gain i.e. cannot make a charge for the service
- Sell-on the swarm to a third party

The Swarm Collector must be familiar with the BBKA Guidelines on swarm collection, know what to do in respect to the safe disposal of the swarm once collected i.e. hive or pass it to another beekeeper. Must be able to communicate with the public and be prepared to show their BBKA membership card