

Can you help a natural nest of native stingless bees in a Varroa Mite Eradication Red Zone?

Updated: 20 December 2022.

Natural nests of native stingless bees that are in hollow trees in one of the Varroa Red Eradication Zones ([more information](#)) may be affected by the toxic pesticide, Fipronil, being used by the NSW Department of Primary Industries to eradicate the Varroa Mite. **Can you help?**

Is the tree:

- in a National Park, Nature Reserve, or other protected area
- OR
- on someone else's private property
- OR
- on your own private property but it is protected by the tree preservation regulations of the local Council area?

Then, you CANNOT legally cut down or lop this tree.

You CANNOT LEGALLY remove this nest.

It is not legal to cut down or lop this tree to remove the nest. However, you could apply to the organisation managing the land or the land owner for permission.

It is TOO LATE to do an Eduction.

If the tree is on your own private property, and you had much more time, you could have tried coaxing the colony to build in a new nest in a box mounted outside the tree. Unfortunately, this process would take a minimum of several months, so it is TOO LATE to attempt this. (This process, called Eduction, Budding, Soft Splitting or Natural Hive Duplication, is described [here](#).)

Is the tree:

- on YOUR OWN private property
- AND
- it is NOT PROTECTED by the tree preservation regulations of the local Council area?

Note that in some local Councils, both dead and living trees are protected.

Then, you COULD legally cut down or lop this tree.

Is the nest in a tree or branch that could be cut down?

You COULD help.

You could cut a complete length out of the trunk or branch to make a log nest with the stingless bee nest still contained in their original tree hollow. You could transport this log nest to a site outside of the red zones.

You need to make sure that the climate of your new site is favourable for stingless bees. For instance, if you are in the Newcastle region, you could move your hives to a northern coastal area, southwards to Sydney / the Illawarra, but not to areas further west than the Hunter Region.

Tips on stabilising and setting up a stingless bee nest in a recently fallen tree:

www.aussiebee.com.au/stinglessbees.html

Is the nest in a tree that you do not wish to cut down?

The ANBA does not recommend trying to save this nest.

It could be possible to remove a section of tree trunk and then transfer the nest from the tree cavity into a box. However, this would cause substantial damage to the nest structure and the loss of many worker bees.

The risk to the colony from attempting this nest transfer may be greater than the risk of poisoning from the Varroa Mite Eradication program. Therefore, the ANBA does not recommend this solution.