

**PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT MEMORANDUM
MEMORANDUM #16-08**

DATE: May 9, 2016
TO: Honorable Mayor Joyce Downing and City Council Members
FROM: James Hayes, City Manager *JH*
Brook Svoboda, Director of Planning and Development *BS*
Travis Reynolds, Planning Manager *TR*
Becky Smith, City Planner *BS*
SUBJECT: Bees and Chickens – Proposed Ordinances

INTRODUCTION:

Pursuant to City Council's direction at the March 21, 2016 study session, staff has revised the proposed ordinances that will allow the keeping of bees and chickens on residential properties in the City of Northglenn. City Council requested that two (2) ordinances be drafted, one (1) for honey bees and one (1) for chickens, so that they can be considered separately. The third ordinance amends Section 11-7-2(g) of the Zoning Ordinance to keep Chapter 11 and 14 of the Municipal Code consistent in allowing the keeping of honey bees and chickens on residential properties.

SUMMARY OF REVISIONS:

Based on the City Council's discussion, staff has revised the Bee and Chicken ordinances. Below is a summary of the revisions.

Bee Ordinance:

- Concern about allowing bees in all residential zones was raised, because all residential zones include apartments and condominiums. Staff revised the ordinance to allow bees on residential properties that have a separately enclosed rear yard. This will exclude residential properties with that cannot meet the standards, such as apartments with common areas, from being able to keep bees.
- It was noted at the meeting that the ordinance only allows bees on residential properties. Concerns were raised about it thereby prohibiting beekeeping on open space, parks and/or community gardens. This ordinance is written specifically to regulate the keeping of bees on residential properties. Staff revised the ordinance to state that this section does not regulate the keeping of bees in open space, parks and community gardens, so that it is understood that these specific regulations to not apply to these spaces.
- Staff removed the section about keeping bees for commercial purposes so as not to exempt people from selling goods at farmers market or as cottage goods. As written, these regulations would limit people from being able to have large commercial enterprises.
- Removed inspectable hives provision. After discussing this with our Bee expert, Sundari Kraft, there is no nuisance related reason that the City would need to go into a hive to inspect it. Bee nuisances occur outside of the hive.
- Based on discussion about aggressive or swarming bees, staff added a provision that "If a colony becomes aggressive or swarms, the beekeeper shall re-queen the colony with a queen selected from stock bred for gentleness and nonswarming characteristics". This is in line with beekeeping best practices.
- Concerns that bees could pass through the fence or flyway were raised during the meeting. Staff revised the regulation so that the flyway is required to be made of solid wall, fence or dense vegetation that does not allow bees to pass through and is located within 5' of the bee's point of egress.

Chicken Ordinance:

- Similar to the bee ordinance, concern about allowing chickens in all residential zones was raised, because all residential zones include apartments and condominiums. Staff revised the ordinance to allow chickens on residential properties that have a dedicated rear yard.
- Staff removed the section about keeping chickens for commercial purposes so as not to exempt people from selling goods at farmers market or as cottage goods. As written, these regulations would limit people from being able to have large commercial enterprises.

ORDINANCE DISCUSSION ITEM:

Currently, the ordinances are written to include a one (1) year sunset provision that requires the Council to take further action on June 30th, 2017 in order to keep the ordinances in the Municipal Code. During the March 21st meeting there was no discussion regarding this provision. Due to the unorthodox nature of this clause, staff is seeking direction from Council regarding this provision and is offering the following options:

- Keep the provision in the ordinances as is and have them brought back to City Council for discussion and further action prior to June 30th, 2017 or let the ordinances expire.
- Remove the sunset clause.
- Revise the clause to allow people that obtain a license to continue having chickens and or bees on their property legally, so long as they are not creating a nuisances, should the ordinance not be continued after the sunset date.

UPDATED ORDINANCE BASED ON 4/25/16 COUNCIL FIRST READING:

City Council had the first reading of the three ordinances during the meeting held April 25th, 2016. The ordinances were approved for second reading scheduled May 9th, 2016 with the following friendly amendments:

Bee Ordinance

- *Section 14-3-18(m) was added to clarify that the allowance of chickens through this ordinance is allowing it as a licensed activity and shall not be deemed to confer a property right.*
- *The “Sunset” clause was removed.*
- *Section 3 was added to the ordinance to direct City staff to evaluate the impacts of implementing the chickens ordinance and provide the information to City Council via report on or before June 30th, 2017.*

Chickens Ordinance

- *Section 14-3-19(m) was added to clarify that the allowance of beekeeping through this ordinance is allowing it as a licensed activity and shall not be deemed to confer a property right.*
- *The “Sunset” clause was removed.*
- *Section 3 was added to the ordinance to direct City staff to evaluate the impacts of implementing a backyard beekeeping ordinance and provide the information to City Council via report on or before June 30th, 2017.*

COUNCIL DECISION:

The Council’s options in this matter are as follows:

- 1) Approve these ordinances as written;
- 2) Approve ordinances with revisions; or
- 3) Oppose the ordinances; or
- 4) Table the discussion for further consideration.

STAFF REFERENCE:

Brook Svoboda, Director of Planning and Development	bsvoboda@northglenn.org	303.450.8937
Travis Reynolds, Planning Manager	treynolds@northglenn.org	303.450.8836
Becky Smith, City Planner	bsmith@northglenn.org	303.450.8741

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A	License Applications
Attachment B	Information Packets

Keeping of Chickens License Application

Backyard Chickens Rules and Regulations:

- **Legal Parameters** – It is unlawful to keep backyard chickens without a license, in violation of the terms in Ordinance 14-3-18 (regulations referenced below), or if the license has been revoked for any reason.
- **License** – A backyard chicken license is required. Licenses may be issued on residential properties with dedicated rear yards; this excludes apartments and condominiums with shared outdoor spaces.
- **Number allowed** – No more than six (6) chickens are permitted per parcel.
- **Gender Restriction** – Hens or females only; roosters or males are prohibited.
- **Coop and Ranging Standards** –
 - o **Structure** – A coop is a physical structure where chickens are kept and that provides such chickens with protection and shelter.
 - The coop must be predator resistant.
 - The coop size must not exceed 120 square feet, and must provide at least four (4) square feet of space per bird.
 - The coop height must not exceed six (6) feet in height.
 - o **Location** – The chicken coop must be placed at least five (5) feet from property fence line and at least twenty (20) feet from residence or primary structure on adjacent property. Coops must reside in the rear yard of the premises.
 - o **Ranging** – Chickens must have space to range in the rear yard.
 - If a chicken run is used, chickens must be provided a minimum of twenty (20) square feet of permeable surface per bird.
 - Chickens are allowed to range in the rear yard, up to the property line, but must be kept in the required chicken coop from dusk until dawn.
 - Chickens allowed to range in the rear yard must be contained by a fence adequate to contain animals. The fence must be a minimum of four (4) feet in height.
- **Slaughtering** – Chickens may not be killed, on the premises, by or at the direction of the owner or keeper except pursuant to the lawful order of state or county health officials, or for the purpose of euthanasia when surrendered to a licensed veterinarian for such purpose, or as otherwise expressly permitted by law.
- **Excrement** – The owner of any chickens kept in the City of Northglenn shall cause excreta to be removed from any pen, cage, coop or yard in which such chickens are kept to prevent contamination, diseases, hazards and odors. The accumulation of excreta upon any premises in violation of the provisions of this ordinance shall be unlawful and shall be deemed a public nuisance in accordance with Chapter 9, Article 11 (Northglenn Nuisance Ordinance) of the Northglenn Municipal Code.

Applicant Acknowledgment:

Applicant acknowledges that he/she is familiar with the provisions of Chapter 14, Article 3, Section 18 (described above) of the Northglenn Municipal Code regulating the keeping of chickens in the City of Northglenn. The applicant also understands this ordinance was passed with a sunset provision allowing Northglenn City Council the right to allow this ordinance to expire on June 30, 2017 unless further action is taken.

Applicant (print): _____ Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Signature & Date: _____ Received By: _____



Keeping of Honey Bees License Application

Backyard Beekeeping Rules and Regulations:

- **Legal Parameters** – It is unlawful to keep backyard honeybees without a license, in violation of the terms in Ordinance 14-3-19 (regulations referenced below), or if the license has been revoked for any reason.
- **License** – A backyard beekeeping license is required. Licenses may be issued on residential properties with dedicated rear yards; this excludes apartments and condominiums with shared outdoor spaces.
- **Hives allowed** – No more than two (2) honey bee hives are permitted per parcel.
- **Hive Placement** – Hives must be placed in the rear yard.
- **Hive Screening Required** –
 - **Flyway barrier** – a permanent vertical structure made of common building materials or natural vegetation that augments a honey bee’s flight path. A flyway barrier’s utility is to adjust the flight path of honey bees causing them to fly above human contact.
 - Flyway must be six (6) feet in height.
 - Consist of solid wall, fence, dense vegetation or combination thereof, which will not allow the bees to pass through, but rather over.
 - Flyway must be located within five (5) feet of the hive’s egress.
 - Flyway must extend ten (10) feet beyond the colony in each direction.
- **Water** – Each beekeeper shall ensure that a convenient source of water is available at all times to the honey bees so that the honey bees are discouraged from congregating at swimming pools, pet water bowls, birdbaths or other water sources where they may cause human, or domestic pet contact.
- **Aggressive bees and swarms** – If a colony becomes aggressive or swarms, the beekeeper shall re-queen the colony with a queen selected from stock bred for gentleness and nonswarming characteristics.
- **Prohibited Bees** – Africanized bees shall be prohibited.
- **Maintenance of hives** – Any honey bee colony not residing in a hive structure intended for beekeeping, or any swarm of bees or colony residing in a standard or homemade hive which, by virtue of its condition, has obviously been abandoned by the beekeeper, is unlawful and shall be deemed a public nuisance in accordance with Chapter 9, Article 11 (Northglenn Nuisance Ordinance) of the Northglenn Municipal Code. The hive may be summarily destroyed or removed from the City by an appropriate designee. The beekeeper will have thirty (30) days from the time of the complaint to bring the hive/hives into compliance.

Applicant Acknowledgment:

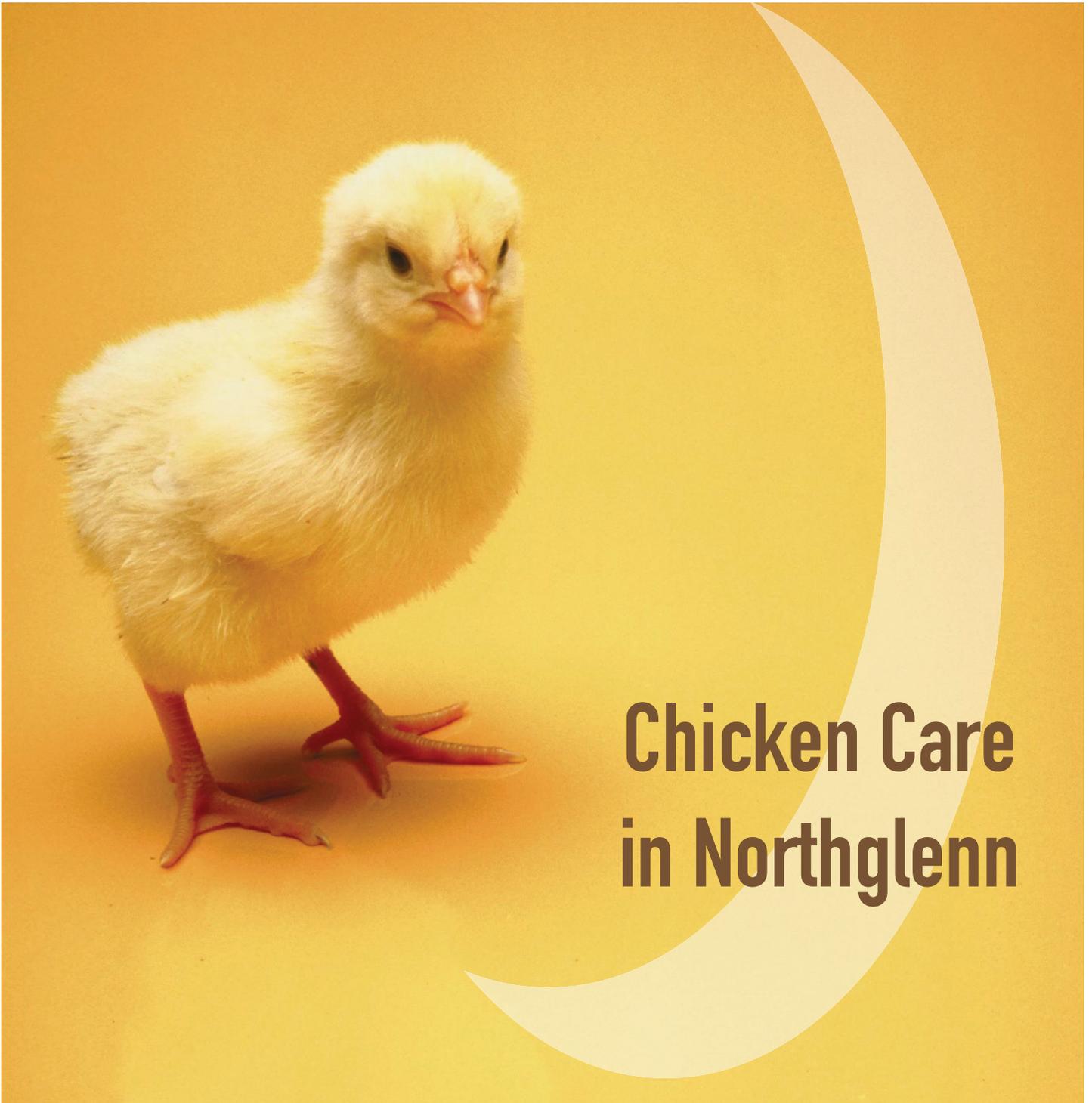
Applicant acknowledges that he/she is familiar with the provisions of Chapter 14, Article 3, Section 19 (described above) of the Northglenn Municipal Code regulating the keeping of honey bees in the City of Northglenn. The applicant also understands this ordinance was passed with a sunset provision allowing Northglenn City Council the right to allow this ordinance to expire on June 30, 2017 unless further action is taken.

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Phone: _____ Email: _____

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Chicken Care in Northglenn



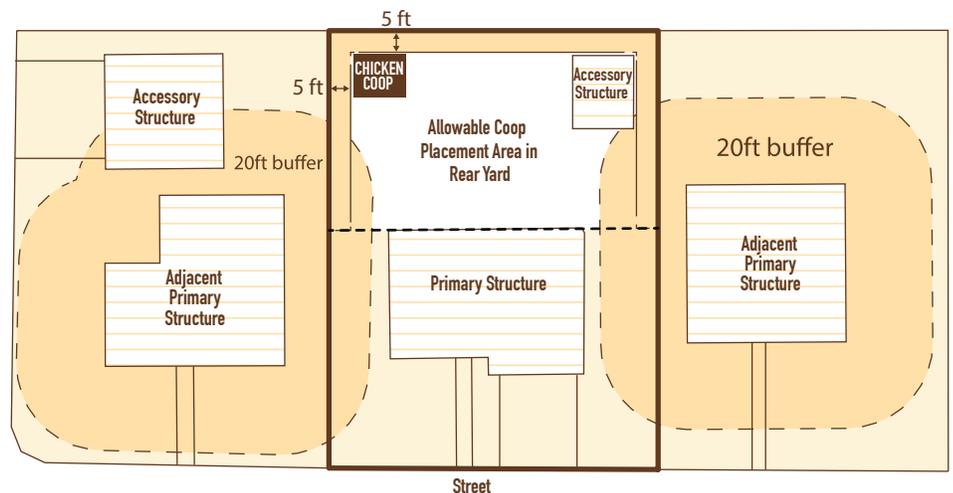
Backyard Chickens Rules and Regulations

- **Legal Parameters** – It is unlawful to keep backyard chickens without a license, in violation of the terms in Ordinance 14-3-18 (regulations referenced below), or if the license has been revoked for any reason.
- **License** – A backyard chicken license is required. Licenses may be issued on residential properties with dedicated rear yards; this excludes apartments and condominiums with shared outdoor spaces.
- **Number allowed** – No more than six (6) chickens are permitted per parcel.
- **Gender Restriction** – Hens or females only; roosters or males are prohibited.

- **Slaughtering** – Chickens may not be killed, on the premises, by or at the direction of the owner or keeper except pursuant to the lawful order of state or county health officials, or for the purpose of euthanasia when surrendered to a licensed veterinarian for such purpose, or as otherwise expressly permitted by law.
- **Excrement** – The owner of any chickens kept in the City of Northglenn shall remove excrement from any pen, cage, coop or yard in which such chickens are kept to prevent contamination, diseases, hazards and odors. The accumulation of excreta upon any premises in violation of the provisions of this ordinance shall be unlawful and shall be deemed a public nuisance in accordance with Chapter 9, Article 11 (Northglenn Nuisance Ordinance) of the Northglenn Municipal Code.

Coop and Ranging Standards

- **Structure** – A coop is a physical structure where chickens are kept and that provides such chickens with protection and shelter.
 - The coop must be predator resistant.
 - The coop size must not exceed one hundred and twenty (120) square feet, and must provide at least four (4) square feet of space per bird.
 - The coop height must not exceed six (6) feet in height.



- **Location** – The chicken coop must be placed at least five (5) feet from property fence line and at least twenty (20) feet from residence or primary structure on adjacent property. Coops must reside in the rear yard of the premises.
- **Ranging** – Chickens must have space to range in the rear yard.
 - If a chicken run is used, chickens must be provided a minimum of twenty (20) square feet of permeable surface per bird.
 - Chickens are allowed to range in the rear yard, up to the property line, but must be kept in the required chicken coop from dusk until dawn.
 - Chickens allowed to range in the rear yard must be contained by a fence adequate to contain animals. The fence must be a minimum of four (4) feet in height.



Frequently Asked Questions

- **Is there a permit or a license required to have backyard chickens in Northglenn?**

Yes – A backyard chicken license is required prior to having chickens on the premises. A license application can be completed with the Northglenn Planning and Development Department. Applications will be taken at the Building Department front counter.

- **What is the cost for a backyard chicken license?**

A \$25 one-time fee must be submitted with the license application.

- **Northglenn allows me to have chickens, but my Homeowners Association (HOA) or Subdivision Covenants does not. Which rules do I follow?**

Homeowner associations and subdivision covenants have private authority to regulate the structures and uses permitted within a neighborhood. Whether or not Northglenn allows them, if your HOA or subdivision covenants prohibits chickens, you are not allowed to have them. Always check if you are governed by subdivision covenants or with your HOA prior to making any home improvements or keeping chickens.

- **Can my chickens roam free in my yard?**

Yes – but they must remain in the rear yard and the yard must have at least a 4-foot fence that is adequate to contain the chickens. Chickens must be secured in the coop during non-daylight hours.

- **Can I keep roosters or other domestic fowl?**

No – it is unlawful to keep any other domestic fowl or roosters within the City of Northglenn. Backyard chickens are restricted to only allow for female hens.

- **My neighbor has chickens, but I don't think they have a license. Who should I call?**

To report the keeping of chickens without a license, you should contact the Northglenn Planning and Development Department at 303.450.8739.

- **My neighbor has a chicken license, but I think they are in violation of the regulations. Who should I call?**

To report chicken keeping nuisances and violations, you should contact code enforcement (Neighborhood Services) at 303.280.7876.

- **Where can I get more information about proper care and best practices for keeping backyard chickens?**

We have several links and information at www.northglenn.org/chickens. You can reference this handout for tips to keeping chickens or reference the following link: <http://www.denverext.colostate.edu/chickeninfo.html>

Document Sources:

- BackYardChickens.com
- Colorado State University Extension



Chicken Care Essentials

Once hens have been adopted, proper care and housing are vital. In addition to regular daily attention, feed, clean water and securing them in their shelter at night, the following care principles are also essential:

- **Chickens are heat- and cold-sensitive.** Like dogs and cats, chickens must have shelter to protect them from temperature extremes. Hens and roosters with large single combs are prone to frostbite in cooler climates, and all chickens need shade during intense heat. The shelter should be both insulated and well-ventilated. Straw bedding will add comfort and warmth to a shelter's floor space, but it should be replaced regularly with new, clean straw.

- **Predator protection is vital.** Chickens need absolutely secure shelter at night or they can easily fall prey to urban wildlife like raccoons and opossums. Dogs may also attack chickens. Chickens must be completely enclosed in a safe henhouse, with four solid walls and a sturdy roof, every night. Predators can also dig under fences and walls, so this should be considered when planning the chickens' home.

During the day, chickens should be kept in a fully-fenced enclosure or yard with proper protection from aerial day-time predators, dogs and, in the case of small bantam hens, free-roaming cats.

- **Hens need an appropriate environment.** Hens need an enclosed nesting space (a "nestbox") in which to lay their eggs. They also need an elevated roost on which to perch at night; this is where they prefer to sleep. Hens enjoy dirt, sand, or peat for dustbathing, and they should also have free access to grass and other vegetation to engage in natural pecking, scratching, and foraging behaviors.

Often-used areas may become barren, and it is important to provide plenty of space, giving them as much room as possible to express natural behavior outdoors.

Hen houses, coops, and runs must be kept very clean at all times, for the health of the chickens and the food safety of the eggs.

- **Chickens will require veterinary care.** While it may be tempting to think of a backyard flock as a source of inexpensive eggs, hens, like cats and dogs, require periodic veterinary care. Chickens can become ill or get injured, and vet exams and treatment can easily cost over \$100 per visit. These expenses should be carefully considered before deciding to keep backyard chickens. Not all avian veterinarians are experienced with chickens, so be sure to locate a trusted poultry vet in your area ahead of time. In some cases, books or online message

boards can help with minor injuries or problems. Fowl in Colorado do not require preventative vaccinations in order to remain healthy.

- **Vacation help is a must.** Since chickens require daily care, a designated caretaker must be arranged for vacations and other periods away from the house. Someone must be present to feed and water the hens and to put them inside their secure shelter every evening.

- **Chicken nutrition is important.** It is a common misconception that chickens can be fed on corn kernels or kitchen scraps alone. Chickens need a balanced diet, like one of the commercially available feeds that have been carefully formulated by nutritionists specifically for adult hens. The protein requirements of chickens change with the birds' age, so it's important to feed an age-appropriate diet. Laying hens also need access to a supplemental source of course calcium, such as limestone (available at livestock supply stores) if their feed ration does not already contain enough. In addition to calcium, hard insoluble granite grit should be offered two or three days per month.

Chickens enjoy fresh fruits, grains and vegetables in addition to their regular feed, but some plants can be toxic. Avoid raw green potato peels, dried or undercooked beans, and avocados. Chickens should receive fresh feed and water daily. Discard any old, moldy or stale feed.

The Colorado State University Extension system has listed several chicken information resources on their website, including "Principles of Feeding Small Flocks of Chickens at Home" (http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/AG_Poultry_2008-02pr.pdf).

- **Prevent disease.** Chickens can carry and become ill from a variety of infectious diseases. It is important to keep the hens' environment clean with regular manure removal, and by washing the feed and water containers. You should also avoid mixing birds from different flocks. Temporarily quarantine any new birds for two weeks and watch them closely for signs of illness or parasites before introducing them into an already established group. Don't share equipment with neighbors (each chicken house should have dedicated tools, wheelbarrows, buckets, etc.), because pathogenic organisms can travel on these items.

- **Give your birds plenty of attention.** If you spend time watching and interacting with your chickens, you will find that each one has a unique personality, and they are friendly and curious when treated kindly. They display interesting behavior patterns such as dustbathing and foraging, and their complex social interactions are entertaining to observe. Enjoy their antics, and remember that your hens are completely dependent on you for responsible, committed care for their entire lives.



Bee Care in Northglenn



Backyard Beekeeping Rules and Regulations

- **Legal Parameters** – It is unlawful to keep backyard honey-bees without a license, in violation of the terms in Ordinance 14-3-19 regulations referenced below, or if the license has been revoked for any reason.

- **License** – A backyard beekeeping license is required. Licenses may be issued on residential properties with dedicated rear yards. This excludes apartments and condominiums with shared outdoor spaces.

- **Hives allowed** – No more than two (2) honey bee hives are permitted per parcel.

- **Hive Placement** – Hives must be placed in the rear yard.

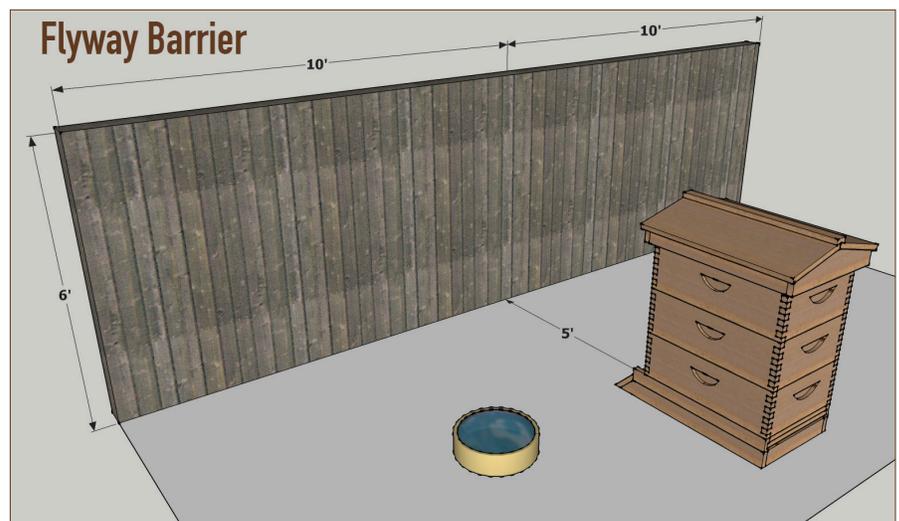
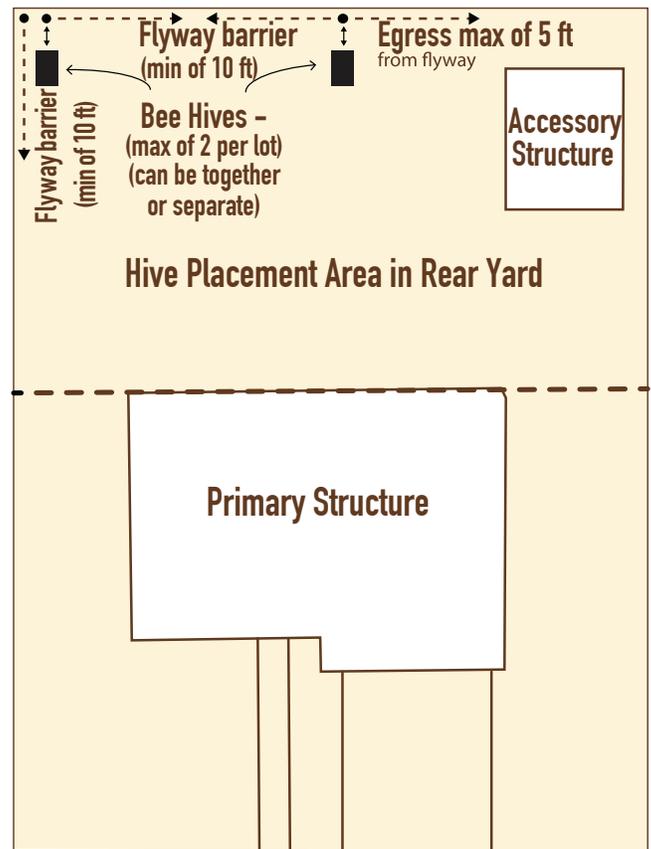
- **Hive Screening Required** –

- Flyway barrier – a permanent vertical structure made of common building materials or natural vegetation that augments a honey bee's flight path. A flyway barrier's utility is to adjust the flight path of honey bees causing them to fly above human contact.

- Flyway must be six (6) feet in height.
- Consist of solid wall, fence, dense vegetation or combination thereof, which will not allow the bees to pass through, but rather over.
- Flyway must be located within five (5) feet of the hive's egress.
- Flyway must extend ten (10) feet beyond the colony in each direction.

- **Water** – Each beekeeper shall ensure that a convenient source of water is available at all times to the honey bees so they are discouraged from congregating at swimming pools, pet water bowls, birdbaths or other water sources where they may cause human, or domestic pet contact.

- **Aggressive bees and swarms** – If a colony becomes aggressive or swarms, the beekeeper shall re-queen the colony with a queen selected from stock bred for gentleness and non-swarmling characteristics.



- **Prohibited Bees** – Africanized bees shall be prohibited.
- **Maintenance of hives** – Any honey bee colony not residing in a structure intended for beekeeping or any swarm of bees or colony residing in a standard or homemade hive which, by virtue of its condition, has obviously been abandoned by the beekeeper,

is unlawful and shall be deemed a public nuisance in accordance with Chapter 9, Article 11 (Northglenn Nuisance Ordinance) of the Municipal Code. The hive may be summarily destroyed or removed from the city by an appropriate designee. The beekeeper will have thirty (30) days from the time of the complaint to bring the hive/hives into compliance.



Education

All beekeepers should have a solid understanding of honey bee biology and basic beekeeping methods. The Colorado State Beekeepers Association (CSBA) strongly suggest that new beekeepers take a basic beekeeping course and read at least three different beekeeping guides. Here are some books that the CSBA recommends:

- *The Beekeeper's Handbook* by Alphonse Avitabile & Diana Sammataro
- *Beekeeping for Dummies* by Howland Blackiston
- *First Lessons in Beekeeping* by Keith S. Delaplane
- *Natural Beekeeping: Organic Approaches to Modern Apiculture* by Ross Conrad
- *The ABC & XYZ of Bee Culture: An Encyclopedia Pertaining to the Scientific and Practical Culture of Honey Bees* by Amos Ives Root, Ann Harman, Dr. Hachiro Simanuki and Kim Flottum
- *The Backyard Beekeeper: An Absolute Beginner's Guide* by Kim Flottum
- *Beekeeping: A Practical Guide* by Richard E. Bonney
- *Honey Bee Biology and Beekeeping* by Dewey M. Caron

CSBA suggests that beekeepers should stay informed of recommended changes in beekeeping practices, including the treatment of parasites and illness, threats to honeybee health and government regulations. One way to do so is to become a member of a beekeeping association that holds regular meetings. Joining a local club will keep you up to date on current health and environmental conditions in your local area.

Additionally, subscribing to a beekeeping magazine such as Bee Culture, American Beekeeping Journal, Beekeepers Quarterly, Beekeeping and Bee Craft offers a broader overview of ideas. There are many on-line repositories of information maintained by beekeeping supply companies and well respected beekeepers. Consider your Colorado State Beekeepers Association's website as a place to start becoming more informed.

Document Sources:

- Mid-Atlantic Apicultural Research & Extension Consortium (MAAREC)
 - BackYardChickens.com
- Colorado State Beekeeper Association (CSBA)



Frequently Asked Questions

- **Is there a permit or a license required to keep honey bees in Northglenn?**

Yes – A beekeeping license is required prior to having bees on the premises. A license application can be completed with the Planning and Development Department. Applications will be taken at the Building Division front desk.

- **What is the cost for a beekeeping license?**

A \$25 one-time fee must be submitted with the license application.

- **Northglenn allows me to have honey bees, but my Homeowners Association (HOA) or Subdivision Covenants does not. Which rules do I follow?**

Homeowner associations and subdivision covenants have private authority to regulate the structures and uses permitted within a neighborhood. Whether or not Northglenn allows them, if your HOA or subdivision covenants prohibits bees, you are not allowed to have them. Always check if you are governed by subdivision covenants or with your HOA prior to making any home improvements or keeping honey bees on your property.

- **What if my honey bees become aggressive or swarm?**

Generally, replacing the queen will alleviate a mean hive. A colony's temperament is determined by its queen's characteristics, its health, environmental factors and proximate activities. Beekeepers should monitor the behavior of their bees to make sure their hives are not displaying aggressive behaviors. If the bees are, the beekeeper should replace the queen with a breed of gentle disposition.

Swarming is a natural honeybee behavior, but it can be prevented and minimized in urban settings. Best management practices to reduce swarming behaviors include:

- Appropriately timed addition of extra boxes for brood rearing
- Brood chamber manipulation and/or colony division
- Use of screened bottom boards.

If a swarm occurs, efforts should be made to collect the swarm.

- **My neighbor has honey bees, but I don't think they have a license. Who should I call?**

To report the keeping of bees without a license you should contact the Northglenn Planning and Development Department at 303.450.8739.

- **My neighbor has a bee license, but I think they are in violation of the regulations. Who should I call?**

To report beekeeping nuisances and violations you should contact code enforcement (Neighborhood Services) at 303.280.7876.

- **Where can I get more information about proper care and best practices for beekeeping?**

This document contains several tips on beekeeping. Several links are located at www.northglenn.org/bees. This includes the Colorado State Beekeeper Association (CSBA) – <http://coloradobeekeepers.org/> and CSBA Best Management Practices for Urban, Suburban and Small Scale Beekeeping – <http://coloradobeekeepers.org/csba/images/2015/CSBA-Urban-Best-Management-Practices-FINAL.pdf>.



Keeping Bees in Populated Areas

Keeping bees successfully in a populated area requires an intimate understanding of basic bee biology, property rights and human psychology. It is possible to keep bees in crowded suburban areas or on tiny city lots cities without problems. Even in a city, a hive or two of honey bees will find enough forage to sustain themselves and yield a surplus of honey for harvest.

Beekeepers in suburbs and cities need to manage their bees so that they are not a nuisance to neighbors. By understanding the circumstances under which bees will bother people, we can take measures to alter these circumstances so that the bees do not create a problem.

- **Consider neighbors first** – Evaluate every hive manipulation and the natural biology of honey bees with your neighbors foremost in mind. Your objective should be to ensure that your neighbors have no reason to complain.

- **Keep gentle bees** – It is imperative to maintain gentle colonies. If a colony becomes mean for any reason, requeening with a new queen of gentle stock will usually change the temperament.

- **Know bee biology** – Since bees and beekeeping are so complex, keep a reference book close at hand. A subscription to a bee journal will help. Beekeepers should become intimately familiar with the best times to inspect their colonies (based on the time of day, weather, and bee operations), how to best maintain control of the bees and what to do if bees become aggressive (by requeening the colony).

- **Location matters** – Bee hives should be kept in such a condition so the bees are content and “happy.” A good location is in full sun the whole day. Bees in the shade tend to be more aggressive. The hives should be dry and the bottom boards should slope forward so rain water can run out the front. Hive stands help elevate the bees off the ground. This makes it easier to keep the hives dry by letting air circulate under the bottom board. Placing the hives 4–6 inches off the ground also makes it less likely that weeds or grass will obstruct the entrance.

- **Halt swarming** – Always practice good swarm prevention to keep your colonies intact. Sufficient room in the brood chambers and adequate honey storage area will keep swarming at a low level. The reversal of brood hive bodies every 10 days during swarming season is an excellent method of ensuring sufficient brood rearing room. For colonies that persist in queen rearing, dividing the colony is the best means of avoiding swarming. Know how to capture swarms – this is a civic contribution.

- **Keep water source nearby** – Maintain a water source close to the colonies. When water is not close, bees may visit swimming pools, bird baths, hanging wash, etc. When using open containers to supply water, place floating blocks, wire or some structure for bees to stand on while they gather the water.

- **Conceal hives** – Put a hedge and/or fence around your colonies. This will remove the hives from view, cut down on vandalism, and most importantly, cause the bees to fly upwards and over people’s heads when foraging from the hive. Shrubs and trees attractive to honey bees can be planted when constructing such hedges to increase bee pasturage.

A flyway or fence near the hive also sets the bee’s flight pattern. Bees flying from their hive to gather food will fly 3–6 feet above the ground. This may make them an annoyance to people who might be passing by. Planting a hedge or erecting a fence at least six feet high forces the bees to fly above head level.

- **Stop robbing** – When manipulating and examining hives, keep robbing at a minimum. Robber bees will rob another hive if the hive is weak or if there are drought conditions and there is a lack of nectar sources. There are ways to identify robbing and stop it. A robbing condition produces aggravated bees and greatly increases searching behavior when little food is available; this often produces mean colonies. To prevent robbing, spare equipment stored outside should be bee tight. When examining hives, cover honey supers. Do not leave honey supers open and make examinations short when robbing is prevalent.

- **Honey handling equipment** – If you don’t have the proper equipment, arrange to get together with other beekeepers or a bigger operator to extract honey. The proper equipment can be too great an investment for the starting individual and other methods of honey removal and wax rendering are messy and seldom worth the time and effort. A group going together on equipment or paying a small fee to a beekeeper with the proper equipment will get the honey extracted sanitarily and efficiently.

- **Beekeeping equipment** – See that you have access to sufficient equipment for the number of colonies you want to maintain. It is best to use equipment of standard dimensions and to keep the equipment painted and in good shape.