

Bees and Wasps


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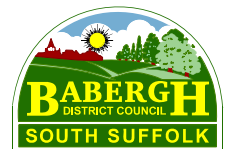
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01473 826622



Bees and Wasps

Advice to Householders



Bees and Wasps

CHARACTERISTICS

The common wasp is about 14mm long and brightly banded in yellow and black. The hornet, which is probably the least aggressive of the wasps, is considerably larger and marked in yellow and brown.



Bumble Bee



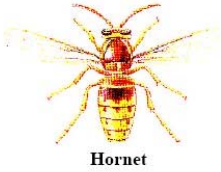
Honey Bee



▲ Adult Hoverfly



Wasp



Hornet

▲ The identity of a bee, wasp, hornet and honey bee

BEHAVIOUR

Bees and wasps belong to the Order Hymenoptera. A number of this species, including the wasps and bees are generally social and live in colonies, nests or hives. Some have the ovipositor (tube through which an insect deposits eggs) adapted to stinging whilst others cannot sting.

The workers can be seen in large numbers causing problems in both domestic and catering situations due to their foraging habits, whilst collecting food for the queen. However the vast majority of species of this Order, especially honey bees are in fact highly beneficial in their role as pollinators, and measures should be taken to ensure that only nests from domestic or other similar situations are removed or destroyed.

Wasps: The queen wasp emerges from hibernation in the spring and builds a round nest 2-3" in diameter from chewed wood pulp. In this she lays eggs from which hatch pale grubs. These are then fed on insects captured by the Queen.

Bees and Wasps

Eggs are laid from early May onwards. After a few weeks, these pupate and the adult workers emerge and take over building the nest and feeding the queen. This then allows the queen to concentrate on producing large numbers of eggs. The nest, once complete, may contain several thousand wasps and is often built below ground in a garden, inside a hollow tree, in a roof space or attic, where the wasps may have considerable contact with humans. It is late summer when the wasps become a particular nuisance as they go for ripe fruit, jams and other sweet substances.

STINGS

The sting is caused by the injection of poison into the victim by the ovipositor of the females. Unlike bees, the wasp can withdraw the sting.

Wasp and beestings around the throat may lead to respiratory obstruction or may be directly toxic causing faintness, respiratory difficulty, swelling to the face, vomiting, diarrhoea, abdominal pain, cramp and perhaps urticaria (nettle rash). These symptoms are only likely to occur after a mass attack. The main hazard is the risk of shock arising from repeated stings. The symptoms may appear rapidly and medical attention should be sought quickly.

CONTROL MEASURES

Destruction of the nest is the only satisfactory method of control. In an enclosed space, such as a loft, the use of an insecticidal smoke generator is effective. In other areas, an insecticidal dust may be applied to the nest itself and the surrounding area. If possible control methods should be carried out at night when the majority of the wasps are in the nest. Suitable precautions should be taken when treating the nest as the wasps will become aggressive when they are disturbed.