

Social Wasps

Paper Wasp



The paper wasp is a social wasp meaning that they develop colonies with specific castes. They are approximately 3/4" in length. They can be identified by the tapering at the beginning of the abdomen and end of the abdomen. Hornets and yellow jackets do not have this characteristic. They are black and a dirty yellow in color. In recent years, we have seen a much greater number of Red or Brown Paper Wasps, also. This wasp can be found in our area abundantly nesting in areas such as under eaves and deck railings. They will build a cone shaped nest (flat at the bottom) that is gray in color. They are not extremely aggressive, but they will become aggressive if they feel their nest is in danger and will inflict multiple stings.

Yellow Jackets



Yellow Jackets are another form of a social wasp found in our area during the summer months. They are often mistaken for bees by homeowners when they are unfortunate enough to have this wasp choose their home as a nesting site. Yellow Jackets are about 1/2" to 5/8" in length. Their colors are bright yellow markings

with a black background. Yellow Jackets will build their nests in the ground, in wall voids in your home, or other protected areas. They are scavengers and feed on other insects. These wasps will defend their nest very aggressively. DO NOT try to remove a nest of yellow jackets on your own; call a pest professional!

Hornets



Hornets can range in size from 3/4" to almost 1 1/2" depending on the species. The European Hornet is brown and yellow. They will typically build nests on the side of trees, inside of hollowed-out trees, on the side of buildings, in the ground, and in wall voids. They also will defend their nests aggressively. Once again, do not try to remove a hornet nest on your own; call a professional.

Solitary Wasps

Cicada Killer Wasp



Cicada Killers become a common pest in our area (especially in any area where cicadas are abundant) during mid to late summer. As soon as the cicadas appear, these wasps appear. Their sheer size, approximately 2" to 1 and 1/2" in length terrifies most people. They have a long and robust abdomen which tapers to a point. The color of this species is a black background with very bright yellow markings. These wasps get the name "cicada killer" because that's just what they do; kill cicadas. After stinging a cicada and paralyzing it, they carry the cicada back to their burrow and lay their larva on it. The larva then feeds on the cicada and pupates over winter.

These "burrows" are typically found in terraced rock walls, around bushes, and in other areas of your yard. If you see a hole (or holes) approximately 3/4" in diameter burrowed into some of the areas of your yard described above with a mound of dirt around or beneath the area, this is the culprit. Though they need to be admired for their size, markings, and ability to struggle carrying a cicada larger than they are back to their nesting site, they can be a huge nuisance and strike fear into anyone if they nest in large numbers around your home. A customer once stated to me, "it sound like a helicopter flying by me!" Don't worry too much, they are typically not very aggressive. However, if you can't stand these things nesting around your home, a one time treatment by a pest professional is usually all that is needed for elimination.

Mud Dauber Wasp



Mud daubers are another species of solitary wasp. Coloring varies in different species from a solid shiny black to the black and yellow mud dauber shown above. They are approximately 1 and 1/2" to 1" in length. These wasps, as with cicada killers, are beneficial. Mud daubers act much like the cicada killers in that they also sting other insects and carry them back to their nest for their larva to feed on.