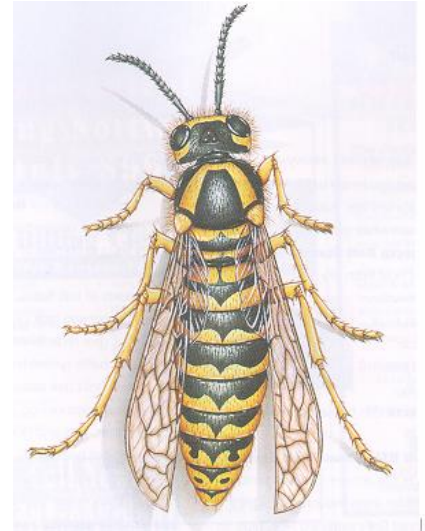


## WASPS (Paper Wasps, Bald-faced Hornets, Yellow Jackets)

There are different kinds of wasps, including those making large paper nests shaped like a football (the bald-faced hornet, which is actually not a true hornet) and those making nests underground or inside a void. Their characteristics are similar. The colony is initiated by a single queen in the spring and they are at their largest number in late summer. They make their nest from a papery pulp chewed from wood fibers. Yellow jackets commonly build nests underground in rockeries or old rodent burrows. Bald-faced hornets are usually in a tree or shrub or under an overhang. Paper wasps build nests under any horizontal surface, such as a roof overhang. Wasps die off in the winter, except for the hibernating queen, who initiates a new colony in the spring. The same nest is not usually used the following year.



Wasps are predators, feeding insects to their young. During late summer and fall they change their food to sweets and carbohydrates. They may become aggressive scavengers around human food and drink. Yellow jackets are particularly attracted to garbage and meat smells during late summer. It is important to keep garbage covered during this period to avoid attracting them.

**Sting prevention** Wasps and hornets have a lance-like stinger and can sting repeatedly. If a wasp comes near you slowly raise your hands to protect your face, remaining calm and stationary. Then move away slowly. Never swing, strike or run rapidly away since that movement can provoke an attack. Restrain children from throwing rocks or spraying nests with water. When outdoors, avoid the use of heavily scented soaps, shampoos, perfumes and related. Controlling yellow jackets in late summer or fall is very difficult. Insecticides will not effectively repel them and traps are generally ineffective. Minimize attracting them by waiting to serve food and drink until people are ready to eat and putting away food promptly.

**Stings** Most people have only local reactions to wasp stings, although a few may experience more serious allergic reactions. Non-allergic reactions range from burning, itching, redness, tenderness and swelling. Allergic reactions may include hives, rash, swelling away from the sting site, headache, upset stomach and minor respiratory symptoms. **A few people may suffer a life-threatening, systemic allergic reaction to a sting, which can cause anaphylactic shock (fainting, difficulty breathing, swelling and blockage in the throat). These symptoms are cause for immediate medical attention. Persons with known systemic allergic reactions to bee or wasp stings should consult with their physician and obtain a sting kit.**

**Control** Nests that are near human activity can pose a problem. If there is concern about stings the nest should be eliminated. **To do it yourself** you need to apply a pesticide directly into the nest opening. Wasp aerosols are available where garden supplies are sold. It is best done at night and when the temperature is below 50F. Wear protective clothing and **follow label directions.**



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