

WASPS 101

WHAT HOMEOWNERS NEED TO KNOW

Dealing with wasps as a homeowner can be challenging. While these pests are quite beneficial to humankind for their contributions to agriculture and controlling insect populations, they're often a real nuisance around personal living spaces. They typically don't sting unless provoked, but that doesn't mean they're a welcome sight at a backyard dinner party. In addition to ruining outdoor activities, wasps also have the potential to make their way inside the home and cause even further trouble. Whether you're facing a wasp issue or looking to proactively prevent one, we'll cover the basics of everything you need to know in this short guide.

WASP APPEARANCE

Knowing what wasps look like is a crucial first step in determining whether you have a wasp issue. There are hundreds of species of wasps, and they're often confused with bees. To distinguish wasps from other flying pests, look for the following:

Wasps can vary greatly in appearance between species, but these are some of the telltale signs that can help you pinpoint the issue and take effective steps to address it.

COLOR

Yellow, red, metallic green/blue, black or brownish coloring



ANATOMY

Two pairs of membranous wings and a pinched waist

BODY SHAPE

More slender, less hairy bodies than most bees



IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM

If you regularly see one or more wasps while in your yard, you likely have a nest somewhere on your property. These nests are often hidden from sight and revealed by a steady stream of wasps in and out of a hole or gap in your home or on your property. As a general rule, wasps tend to gather in high-ground areas like the roof, sending out scouts for food, especially sweet smells and rotting flesh. They're a swarming species, which means when one wasp finds food, it immediately returns to the nest to inform the others. And while they most often conduct themselves outdoors, wasps may also come inside to look for food sources, nesting sites, protected places to hibernate or simply by accident.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

If you happen to find a nest in or around your home, you should never attempt to treat or remove it yourself. There's simply too high of a risk of being stung by dozens or even hundreds of wasps at once, which could cause serious bodily harm. Your best option for removal is always to contact an experienced pest management professional. However, there are a few measures homeowners can take on their own to prevent a wasp issue or address an existing one.

Here are some of the most common solutions for wasps:



INSECTICIDES

As mentioned above, the easiest and most effective way to end a wasp problem is to contact a pest management professional. These trained technicians can apply targeted treatments to wasp nesting locations around your home to kill wasps and stop new colonies from being created. If you choose this recommended option, be sure to clean up any dead wasps you see lying around after treatment, as they may still contain insecticide residues that can pose safety concerns to non-targets such as kids and pets when ingested or touched.



FALSE NESTS

Wasps are highly territorial, which means preventing them can be as easy as creating a false nest on your property. These are widely available and sold at many hardware stores. Colonizing wasps will see the fake nest and be deterred from establishing a presence in or around your home.



TRAPS

When dealing with a minor wasp problem, one option is to simply fill a jar with orange juice or soda, poke holes in the lid and place the jar in the most heavily-traveled wasp location(s). Ever on the lookout for their next meal, the wasps will be drawn to the sweet smell and drowned in the liquid. Replace the bait every night after dark to maintain the trap's effectiveness.

REDUCING ATTRACTIVENESS

Make your property less attractive to wasps by eliminating bare, sandy areas to prevent ground nesting; keeping all food closed or sealed; tightly sealing garbage receptacles; leaving no juice or sweet liquids left out; covering gaps or holes in the exteriors of walls and structures; and keeping doors and windows closed or screened.

THE FINAL BUZZ

If you regularly notice wasps around your home, it's probably time to take action. Even though they don't pose a serious threat to immediate safety, these pests can find their way into tough-to-reach parts of your home and become an ever-present nuisance. **When it comes to wasp prevention, staying vigilant, enacting proper measures and working with a pest management professional will yield the best possible protection for your home.**



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