



Wasps

What do they look like.

As with most insect species there are many varieties of wasps but the 2 most commonly found in Britain are **The common wasp** and the **Tree wasp**. These 2 species are very similar the workers are approximately 16mm in length and have yellow and black bands on the abdomen.

Facts about wasps

- The queens hibernate during the winter, in buildings or under the bark of trees etc.
- In spring the queens look for nesting sites such a hole in the ground, a hollow tree or in spaces within the eaves of a building, lofts, attics and garden sheds etc.
- The queen will build her nest with a papery material that she makes by chewing small pieces of wood and she mixes these with saliva to form a kind of papier mach'e. There is a difference in the nest of the tree wasp, the papery outside is usually a dark grey whereas the common wasp will be beige.
- The queen commences the nest by producing a golf ball sized sphere inside which she constructs a series of about 16 to 20 cells into which she lays eggs. About 7 days later the eggs hatch into grubs, the queen will catch insects and feed them to the grubs. When each has fed until it is full it seals its self into the cell. In the nest she will raise a few workers and these will start to enlarge the nest and help to rear the next generation of wasps. Nest construction starts in earnest in June and will usually reach its maximum size in September, but may not end until late November if the conditions are right.
- Worker wasps will look for food up to 400 metres from the nest. Workers feed mainly on sugary materials such as nectar.
- If lots of wasps and other insects are seen on shrubbery or flowers it is most lightly that they are simply feeding there. A treatment is not required in such circumstances, as it would only kill the wasps that are present at the time.
- The size of wasp colonies will vary from year to year, but at its maximum nests may contain between 5 – 10,000 wasps.

- In the autumn, the young queens mate and leave the nest to hibernate, the rest of the nest dies out and that nest is never used again.

Wasp stings

When stung by a wasp a toxic fluid containing a complex protein is injected through the needle like sting as it penetrates the victim. Individuals react differently to being stung by wasps; some are hardly affected, others suffer considerable pain and swelling. A few people are seriously allergic to wasp stings and in some extreme cases it can result in death due to anaphylactic shock.

How can the Council Help?

- Highly trained officers from the Pest Control section can undertake a treatment for you there is a charge for this service (See the web link for prices).
- The officer undertaking the treatment will decide the best method of treatment; this may be the application of a powder or an insecticidal spray. **The officer will not normally remove the nest**, It will not be reused by any future wasps.
- If the nest is in the roofspace the officer will not enter the roofspace unless it is boarded out (for safety reasons) if the nest is close by the hatch and easily accessible he may treat the nest from a ladder in the hatch opening.
- He will advise you of what he has done and what the likely outcome will be he will leave you a safety sheet providing information about the insecticide that he has used.

How to contact us

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