

# Yellowjackets

**Yellowjacket wasps prey on other insects and also scavenge on human food and garbage.** Yellowjackets defend their nests with stings, like other social wasps and bees, but also are more likely to sting if disturbed while foraging. Stings generally cause pain and short-term injury, but some people suffer severe allergic responses. Prevent injury by avoiding wasps and removing food sources. Trapping or nest treatment may reduce populations. Pesticides other than nest treatments usually are ineffective.

## Make sure it's a yellowjacket.

- ◆ **Yellowjackets are ½ to 1 inch long with jagged, bright yellow and dark black stripes. Their narrow “waist” is barely visible. Other common wasps do not scavenge on food. Yellowjackets nest in holes in the ground, inside wall cavities, or in hanging nests enclosed in grey paper.**
- ◆ **Honeybees are less brightly striped than yellowjackets and are hairier. Usually they aren't attracted to food (although sometimes to sweets) and are unlikely to sting unless trapped or stepped on. They usually nest inside of cavities in trees or houses.**
- ◆ **Paper wasps have long slender waists, build open paper nests under eaves, and rarely are aggressive.**
- ◆ **Mud daubers are dark colored and thread-waisted, build small, hard mud nests, and rarely sting.**

## Keep your cool to avoid stings.

- ◆ **If a wasp lands on you, don't swat it or run. Wait for it to leave, or gently brush it away.**
- ◆ **Do not disturb nests. Wasps flying from a hole in the ground or a building indicate a probable nest.**

## Remove attractive food sources.

- ◆ **Keep foods, including pet food, covered or indoors.**
- ◆ **Cover sugary drinks when outdoors. Yellowjackets may crawl into soda cans.**
- ◆ **Keep garbage in sealed cans and empty regularly.**
- ◆ **Pick up and dispose of ripe fruit.**



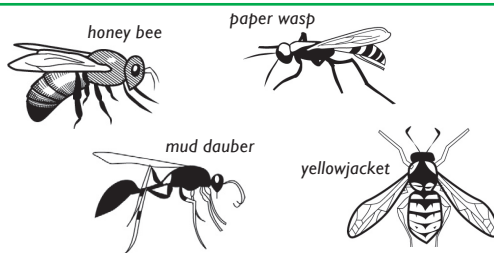
## Use traps to reduce yellowjackets locally.

- ◆ **Hang yellowjacket lure traps out in spring to catch nesting queens. Traps may reduce but not eliminate populations and work only on some species.**
- ◆ **Make a homemade trap with a meat bait hung on a string just above soapy water.**
- ◆ **Place traps a distance away from areas, such as picnic tables, where people congregate.**

## To protect yourself and your family, consider calling a professional if you find nests.

- ◆ **Ask your Mosquito and Vector Control District if they treat nests, or locate a licensed pest control operator in your phone book.**
- ◆ **If you choose to treat nests yourself, wear protective clothing on your body, hands, and head. Use an insecticide that shoots a long stream into the nest entrance.**
- ◆ **Nests may be far away and impossible to locate.**
- ◆ **Paper wasp nests shouldn't require treatment unless they are near human passageways.**

Check out our Web site at [www.ipm.ucdavis.edu](http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu) for more details on yellowjackets and wasp and bee stings.



**Minimize the use of pesticides that pollute our waterways. Use nonchemical alternatives or less toxic pesticide products whenever possible. Read product labels carefully and follow instructions on proper use, storage, and disposal.**

For more information about managing pests, contact your local Cooperative Extension office listed in your phone book or at [www.csrees.usda.gov/Extension/index.html](http://www.csrees.usda.gov/Extension/index.html). If you have a question about choosing a pesticide, contact the National Pesticide Information Center at **1-800-858-7378** or via e-mail at [npic@ace.orst.edu](mailto:npic@ace.orst.edu).



[www.StopPests.org](http://www.StopPests.org)

**What you use in your home affects the health of those around you!**