

What's the Buzz?

European paper wasps, yellow jackets, and hornets are a serious nuisance problem, particularly late in the summer. It is important to distinguish between the various wasps because their potential as problems and their control differ.

European Paper Wasp

The European paper wasp (*P. dominula*) is generally black in color and marked with yellow. They are fairly slender-bodied insects with a distinct constriction of the body between the thorax and abdomen. Also, the long hind legs of paper wasps tend to trail below when the insects are in flight. The European paper wasp is relatively non-aggressive and less likely to sting.

Yellow Jacket

Yellow jackets (*Vespula spp.*) are banded yellow or orange and black and sometimes are mistaken for honey bees, but they lack the hairy body and are more intensely colored. A somewhat blunter, more compact body form distinguishes yellow jackets from the European paper wasp. Schools often find yellow jackets scavenging around dumpsters and trash containers. The western yellow jacket (*V. pensylvanica*) is a particularly important stinging insect in Utah. Also remember that Africanized honey bees exist in Utah and can be found in Iron, Kane, Washington, and San Juan Counties.

Hornet

The most common hornet species is the baldfaced hornet (*D. maculata*), which is stout-bodied and marked with dark and white striping. Stings from hornets usually occur when nests are disturbed.



Did You Know?

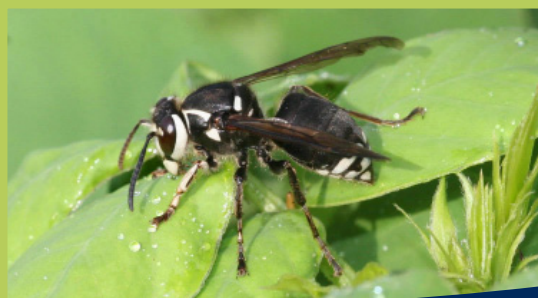
- Yellow jackets, paper wasps, and hornets make nests of paper.
- These insects are beneficial, particularly as predators of other insects and as pollinators.
- Yellow jackets, paper wasps, and hornets use their stingers only for defense.
- Wasps are predators, feeding insects and other arthropods to their young.
- Wasps do not usually reuse their nests.



Above:
European paper wasp
(Whitney Cranshaw, CSU,
Bugwood.org)

Top right:
Western yellow jacket
(Whitney Cranshaw, CSU,
Bugwood.org)

Bottom right:
Baldfaced hornet (Johnny
N. Dell, Bugwood.org)

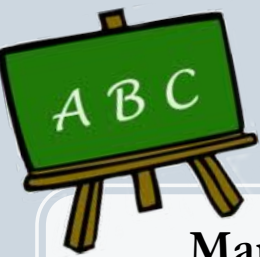




Left:
European paper wasp nest (Joseph Berger, Bugwood.org)

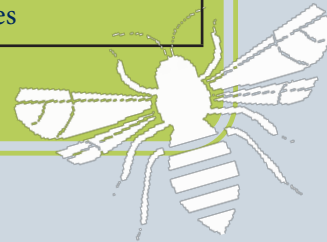


Right:
Bald-faced hornet nest (Jerry A. Payne, USDA Agricultural Research Service, Bugwood.org)



Nesting Habits

	Nest Construction	Nest Location
European Paper Wasp	Paper comb, no surrounding envelope	Attached to wood on the underside of porch decks, eaves, or other overhangs; and in dark cavities
Yellow Jacket	Paper comb with surrounding envelope	Underground using existing hollows, such as those in children's playground equipment
Hornet	Paper comb with surrounding envelope	Attached to tree or shrub branches or under building eaves



Managing Wasps with Integrated Pest Management

- Reduce nesting sites before the colonies become established in early spring.
- Seal all openings that allow access to hollow tubing, such as playground equipment.
- Control wasp nests early in the season when colonies are small.
- Deter yellow jackets by eliminating all food sources such as open garbage cans that provide food and moisture.
- Use baits and traps for control of yellow jackets in June and early July. The western yellow jacket is attracted to the chemical heptyl butyrate, which is included as a lure in many wasp traps. These traps will not attract European paper wasp or hornet.
- European paper wasps can be encouraged to nest in nest boxes. A typical nest box is made of wood and at least 4-inch x 4-inch x 4-inch, open at the bottom. They should be mounted several feet above ground on a solid post.
- If active nests are causing problems, destroy the nest with an insecticide labeled for wasps during late evening or cool periods in early morning.
- Nests can be safely removed in the winter when they are abandoned.

For more info, check out:

Utah State Univ. Fact Sheet: <http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/factsheet/yellowjackets-hornets-wasps09.pdf>

EPA IPM in Schools: www.epa.gov/pesticides/ipm

Colorado State University Extension-- "Nuisance Wasps and Bees": <http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/insect/05525.html>

