

Wasps are swarming

Wasp populations are rising across the state. That's bad!

Don't confuse wasps with bees. Wasps, which include yellow jackets and hornets, can be very aggressive. They can sting you several times without dying. Bees on the other hand, are naturally docile and will only sting if they are under attack. Wasps are generally glossy while bees are fuzzy.

Yellowjackets and hornets start to get more aggressive this time of year as their natural food supplies dwindle. Their populations soar in fall, bringing them into contact with us more often.

You can minimize your exposure to these pests through good sanitation. Seal garbage cans and pick up any empty soda cans nearby. Pick up any fruits that may have fallen from your trees.

Wasp traps are effective at reducing populations, but they fail to kill the queen, leading to persistent problems until she abandons the nest when cold weather arrives.

The German yellowjacket is the most common wasp that lives in ground nests. Kill them by sprinkling Sevin dust or a wasp-killing spray into the hole.

You usually have better success using Sevin dust than wasp-killing sprays for ground nests. But Sevin dust does not kill immediately, so don't stand around to watch if your application will kill the wasps. Wait until the next sunny day and see if the wasps keep using the hole.

If they do, this indicates that the nest is deep in the ground. Get a turkey baster and load it with Sevin. Insert it into the hole and shoot. That will definitely kill the nest.

Hornets don't build nests in the ground. Rather, they build a football-sized, papery nest in a tree. Shoot a wasp-killing spray into the entrance of the nest, located at its bottom. These wasp-killing sprays can be shot from a distance of 20 feet or more (this is important for those of us who are terrified of wasps). These sprays are "knock-down" killers and kill the pests immediately on contact.

Always kill yellowjackets and hornets at night. They are less aggressive at night and will all be in the nest. A cool night is best. Wasps are less likely to fly when temperatures are in the fifties or cooler.

Show some respect to these wasps or they will give you a painful lesson. Wear protective clothing. Don't alert them to your presence when you attack them. And after your application, flee the area!



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