



## PEST CONTROL ADVICE SHEET - WASPS



### Description

Wasps have yellow and black stripes and a narrow waist in the middle.

There are many species of wasp in the UK but the most common are the German Wasp and the Common Wasp.

Wasps can sometimes be mistaken for honey bees or hover flies however bees have brown and orange stripes and are covered in brown like fur. **See bee link.**

Hover flies although a similar colour to wasps can be easily distinguished by their hovering action in flight.

### Life Cycle

The wasp is commonly found in gardens and around the home and will build their nests in trees, bushes, holes in the ground, sheds and lofts.

The queen will emerge in spring and search for a suitable nesting site to construct a small golf ball size nest which will contain around 6 cells.

She will then lay her eggs in the nest within which the eggs will develop into larvae and then into worker wasps. The workers will continue construction of the nest rearing new larvae and new queens.



**Picture:** Queen Nest containing around 6 cells about the size of a golf ball.

The nest its self is constructed of small pieces of wood that are chewed down to a pulp.



**Picture:** Fully developed nests

By the end of the summer, if undisturbed, the nest will have grown considerably and may contain between 2000 to 4000 wasps.

Towards the end of the summer the queen wasps and the males will leave the nest to mate. The fertilized queens will then seek out suitable sites to hibernate over winter.

During the autumn when the weather turns colder the nest will be uninhabited as all the workers would have left the nest and died.

The nest then becomes an empty shell and will ***never be reused again*** although wasps have been known to build a new nest next to a disused one.

### **Health risk**

Wasps can sting. The sting is used to kill small insects for food but can also be used as a weapon.

The reaction to a wasp sting will vary from person to person, some will react with a small amount of pain whilst others may be more sensitive and need to seek medical attention.

### **Identification and Treatment**

Wasp nests can be hard to spot as they can be camouflaged by their surroundings. You may not be able to see the nest at all; the only indication may be wasps flying back and forth the entrance. Wasps do not swarm until the nest has been treated; when they do they will stay close to the nest.

Treatment will consist of pumping insecticide dust either directly in to the nest or in to the entrance where the wasps are tracking back and forth.

The eradication of the nest will depend on its location; if the nest is not visible the wasps will need to carry the insecticide back to the nest. If this is the case the process can take up to 4 days.