

PUBLIC PROTECTION – ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICE

Pest advice - Wasps

What do they look like?

All the wasps found in the United Kingdom, with the exception of the hornet, are very similar with black and yellow bands on their body and two pairs of wings.



Where do they live?

In spring, the queen leaves her hibernating quarters to seek nesting sites. These could be holes in the ground, hollow trees, sheds, loft space etc. The queen starts to build her nest with a papery material that she makes by chewing wood mixed with saliva; this is known as wasp paper. She will raise the first few workers who will then enlarge the nest and care for the immature wasps to follow. The nest construction starts in spring and will reach its maximum size in September, when up to 10,000 workers may be present. An old nest is not used in subsequent years.

What do they eat?

Wasps usually eat insects, which are mainly garden or household pests. They also feed on dustbin waste and animal carcasses.

Pest status

A wasp, unlike a bee, can sting many times. Although the wasp sting is not normally serious, it can be very painful, and in certain cases can cause a severe reaction.

Control - is it necessary?

Nests located in areas away from human contact can be left untreated. It should be remembered that wasps have a beneficial aspect as they kill many garden insect pests.

DIY treatments

If you do decide to treat the nest yourself, suitable products can be purchased from hardware shops and garden centres. However, you must first locate the entrance to the nest. Following the flight pattern of returning wasps may help. Treatment should be carried out very early or late in the day when activity is at a minimum. Apply the insecticide to the entrance of the nest, or directly on to the nest if it is visible.

Keep well away from the treated nest for at least 24 hours. Consider the risks carefully before attempting a treatment yourself. Wasps are very aggressive when their nest is threatened, and multiple stings may result if your protective clothing is inadequate.

Professional treatment

Powys County Council does not undertake treatment for wasps.

Commercial pest control companies are listed on the internet, in the Yellow Pages and Thompson's Local Directory.