

Wasp/Yellow Jacket

Generally small wasps with black and yellow stripes.

Behavior:

Yellow jackets are social insects that live in colonies containing thousands of individuals. Colonies are usually started by a single queen in the early spring, and are very small for the first couple of months. By midsummer, a colony located on or near a house is usually large enough to become a nuisance. These wasps will aggressively attack when their nest is disturbed, and can inflict painful stings. Unlike the honeybee, which stings only one time and then dies, a single yellow jacket can sting many times. Yellow jackets are scavengers and can be beneficial when located in a wooded area or a field. Colonies located in or near a Home, however, can pose a threat to the persons living in the house. When this situation is discovered, the colony or colonies should be eliminated. Because of the danger involved in treating these nests, only a professional should attempt to treat them.

Habitat:

Yellow jackets prefer to locate their nests in the ground, usually in an old rodent burrow or similar hole. This wasp also commonly locates its nest inside the walls of a building by entering through cracks or holes in the outside walls.

Tips for Control

The following precautions should be taken to prevent accidental stings:

- When working in a garden or flowerbed, be aware of numerous wasps flying into and away from a single point in the garden or to a hole in the side of the house. This will usually indicate where a colony might be located.
- Be careful when using powered lawn equipment, such as edgers, trimmers and mowers. Loud, vibrating noises disturb yellow jackets and may send them into an attacking frenzy.
- Stay away from yellow jacket nests once you know where they are located.

If yellow jackets are seen entering and exiting a wall, DO NOT plug the hole. You will only force the wasps to find another way out. Sometimes they might actually eat through an interior wall and enter the house