



## ENVIRONMENT DIVISION

### PEST CONTROL SERVICE

## Bees & Wasps



### ***Characteristics***

The common Wasp is about 14mm long and brightly banded in yellow and black. The Hornet, which is probably the least aggressive of the wasps, is considerably larger and marked in yellow and brown. The Honey Bee is similar in size to wasps but brown all over and the Bumble Bee, larger than the Honey Bee, has a black and yellow stripe or black and orange stripe

There are a number of solitary types of wild bee species, some of which are:

- Mining Bees;
- Mortar or Masonry Bees;
- Carpenter Bees.

They do not form distinct social colonies, although many individual bees will often attack the same area if it provides particularly suitable conditions.

Wasps can be useful at certain times of the year. They feed their grubs on insects and flies and they also help pollinate flowers.

### ***The Wasp's Year***

#### **Spring**

The queen emerges from her winter hibernation and starts to look for a suitable nesting site. When she has found one she begins to build her nest with a papery material that she makes by chewing small pieces of wood with saliva.

The nest consists of a canopy under which there is a stalk, to which tiers of cells are attached. The openings of the cells face downwards and in this she lays eggs from which hatch pale grubs. These are then fed on insects captured by the queen. After a few weeks, these pupate and the adult workers emerge.

#### **Summer**

By about the beginning of July, enough adult workers have emerged from the cells to take over the duties of nest building, feeding the grubs and feeding the queen. The queen will stay in the nest and devotes herself entirely to egg laying. Eventually, a colony might consist of several thousand wasps.

#### **Autumn**

This is the time of year when males and young queens are produced. The males fertilise the queens and the colony dies. The newly hatched queens fly off to find hibernating quarters in dry protected places.

#### **Winter**

The queens hibernate throughout the winter to emerge in the spring. Old nests are not reused, but a specially favourite site may be used again to build a new nest.

### ***Stings***

The sting is caused by the injection of poison into the victim by the ovipositor (tube through which an insect deposits eggs, or adapted to stinging) of the females. Unlike bees, the wasp can withdraw the sting.

Wasp and bee stings around the throat may lead to respiratory obstruction, or may be directly toxic causing faintness, respiratory difficulty, swelling to the face, vomiting, diarrhoea, abdominal pain, cramp and perhaps urticaria (nettle rash). These symptoms are only likely to occur after a mass attack. The main hazard is the risk of shock arising from repeated stings. The symptoms may appear rapidly and medical attention should be sought quickly.

## **Control**

Destruction of the nest is the only satisfactory method of control. In an enclosed space, such as a loft, the use of an insecticidal smoke generator is effective. In other areas, an insecticidal dust may be applied to the nest itself and the surrounding area. If possible, control methods should be carried out at night when the majority of the wasps are in the nest. Suitable precautions should be taken when treating the nest as the wasps will become aggressive when they are disturbed.

People are often frightened of wasps because of their painful stings, but in fact most species rarely sting unless disturbed or annoyed.

## **What can be done?**

Telephone advice and identification of insect pests will be given free of charge. A charge will be made for the treatment of the following:

Wasps at domestic premises, a **minimum** charge of £38.00, which will be increased for work requiring more time and materials. Extra nests will be treated **at the same time** for £10.00 each.

We no longer offer a service for bees and bee swarms, however swarms will usually be dealt with by a local beekeeper. Details can be found at [www.northantsbees.org.uk/swarmret.html](http://www.northantsbees.org.uk/swarmret.html).

Calls made out of office hours will be subject to an additional cost of £10.50. An additional charge of £15.00 will also be levied should ladders be needed for treatment.

If you have a problem with wasps and would like help, please telephone or call in at the Environment Division to make an appointment for a Pest Control Officer to call.

As the Council's cash office closed in April 2009 we can no longer handle money directly. We now encourage payments to be made by banker's card at the time an appointment is made. You can still pay by cheque and give this to the officer when he visits. Alternatively we can send an invoice if you wish but there is however an additional administration charge if you use this service.

Fees (where appropriate) must be paid to:

South Northamptonshire Council  
Springfields  
Towcester  
Northants  
NN12 6AE

Tel: 01327 322322  
Fax: 01327 359946

Office opening hours are: Monday to Thursday 8.45am to 5.15pm Friday 8.45am to 4.45pm

## **PLEASE NOTE:**

Chargeable Pest Control Services will **NOT** be available to persons who have not paid for previous work.

For further information or to comment on this leaflet please contact Pest Control on 01327 322289 or visit SNC's website at [www.southnorthants.gov.uk](http://www.southnorthants.gov.uk) or E-Mail: [pshousing@southnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:pshousing@southnorthants.gov.uk)