



**STROUD
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

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PEST CONTROL SERVICE

Pest Information Leaflet No. 1

WASPS



2002-2003
Crime Reduction in Rural Areas
2004-2005
Services for Older People

Description

There are seven different species of wasp in Britain and northern Europe, and they all have the same general appearance with yellow-black barring and the same habits. The wasps usually seen near houses are the Common wasp and the German wasp, both of which will nest underground and in cavities in trees, walls and buildings e.g. under roof tiles and in lofts. The Hornet is the largest species but is not very aggressive. It occurs mainly in Southern England, nesting in trees and buildings. The wasp community is annual and never produces swarms.

Biology and Habitat

In the spring the overwintered queens leave their hibernating quarters to seek nesting sites. Having selected a site a queen starts to build her nest with a papery material, which she makes by chewing small pieces of wood, mixed with saliva. The queen starts the colony by building a spherical cell about the size of a walnut; inside she constructs 10-20 cells and lays an egg in each. As soon as the eggs hatch the queen is kept busy fetching food for the larvae but after about a month (end of May) the first adult workers emerge and the queen then remains in the nest to concentrate on egg laying while the workers take over the care of the larvae and building the nest. Later in the summer a successful wasp nest may be large enough to hold several thousands of wasps,

and may be as large as a football or even larger.

Towards late summer young queens are produced, when the nest has almost finished its cycle. The fertilised young queens fly off to hibernate individually in dry protected places such as under bark and in sheds. Workers continue to be active until late Autumn or early winter. Eventually they will die, as will the queen responsible for the colony.

Nests are not recolonised the following year, neither do wasps hibernate in the nest, but a specially favourable site may be used again and a new nest started by a new queen.

Control

If you are able to tolerate the wasps then the nest can be left. It will only be occupied for one season and the activity will die down as winter approaches. If you can reach the entrance to the nest then you may be able to treat it yourself.

Wait until the evening as wasps are less active when it becomes cooler and dark. Dust the entrance of the nest liberally with a wasp nest powder (available in garden centres, hardware stores and some chemists). **DO NOT BLOCK UP THE ENTRANCE TO THE NEST, EITHER BEFORE OR AFTER TREATING.**

Safety

Before using an insecticide, to protect yourself and others and to minimise damage to the environment **ALWAYS READ AND FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS PRINTED ON THE CONTAINER**

Pest Control Service

Stroud District Council's Pest Control Service can provide a professional chargeable service for the treatment of wasp's nests. For further details and current charges please ring Stroud 754919 or write to:

Pest Control Service
Environmental Health Service
Stroud District Council
Ebley Mill, Westward Road
Stroud, Glos. GL5 4UB

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15. Mice

e-mail:- environmental.health@stroud.gov.uk