

(revision date:5/16/2018)

European paper wasp

Use Integrated Pest Management (IPM) for successful pest management.

Biology

The European paper wasp was introduced into Washington in the late 1990's. Although we have a native paper wasp, it is found mostly in eastern and central Washington. The European paper wasp is now the most common species in western Washington. Like yellowjackets, they are about 1/2 inch long as workers and are black- and yellow-striped. However, paper wasps have a more thread-like waist than yellowjackets. Fertilized queens overwinter in protected areas and begin building a new colony each spring. The new queens occasionally re-use old nests but usually build their own. Nests contain only one layer of cells and are not enclosed with paper as are yellowjackets. European paper wasps appear more docile than yellowjackets unless startled, at which time they will react fiercely. Their nuisance value is in the obnoxious habit of nesting anywhere, such as under lawn furniture, in light fixtures and mailboxes, as well as under soffits and deck railings. European paper wasps are predators and can be considered beneficial in the landscape since they may prey on insect pests. For more information see WSU Publication FS152E, "The European Paper Wasp."

Management Options

Non-Chemical Management

- ~ Carefully remove nests (particularly in the early stages when there are fewer workers). Wear protective headgear, clothing and gloves when removing the nest.
- ~ Maintain effective, tightly-fitting window and door screens.

Select non-chemical management options as your first choice!

Chemical Management

IMPORTANT: Visit Home and Garden Fact Sheets for more information on using pesticides

Products that come in an aerosol spray can equipped with a spray wand allow for accurate application to outdoor nests from up to 10 feet or more away.

If you choose to use a pesticide, some examples of products that are legal in Washington are listed below. Some products are labeled for just INDOOR or just OUTDOOR use, or may allow both uses. Be sure to choose a product appropriate for your situation. Always read and follow all label directions.

- ~ Assault Wasp & Hornet Killer
 - active ingredient: tetramethrin and permethrin
 - EPA reg no: 3862-176-13051
- ~ Bonide Wasp & Hornet Killer
 - active ingredient: permethrin, tetramethrin, piperonyl butoxide
 - EPA reg no: 4-392
- ~ Claire Jet Force Wasp & Hornet Killer
 - active ingredient: phenothrin and tetramethrin
 - EPA reg no: 706-109
- ~ Enforcer Wasp & Yellow Jacket Foam V
 - active ingredient: tetramethrin, phenothrin
 - EPA reg no: 40849-4
- ~ Bonide Stinger Wasp Hornet & Yellow Jacket
 - active ingredient: phenothrin, tetramethrin
 - EPA reg no: 1021-1780-4
- ~ This list may not include all products registered for this use.

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Images



~ Caption: *European paper wasp (Polistes dominulus)*
~ Photo by: Art Antonelli



~ Caption: *European paper wasp and nest is open-faced with multiple cells.*
~ Photo by: M. Bush