

Wasps

There are two main types of wasps in Northland – paper wasps and the yellow and black common and German wasps.

Wasps affect bee keeping operations by competing for food with bees. Their sting also poses a potential health risk to humans, and both types will strongly defend their nests if humans or animals get too close.

However, they are of some benefit – they kill other pests such as flies and spiders.

GERMAN WASP AND COMMON WASP

Vespa germanica and Vespa vulgaris

These two wasps are very similar in appearance, with yellow and black bodies. They are slightly bigger than a honey bee and have smooth rather than hairy bodies.

The German wasp has a distinct grey coloured nest, while the common wasp nest is a yellowish to reddish brown. The nests are often underground, with one or more entrance holes, although they may be also found in sheltered spots such as the branches of trees.

AUSTRALIAN AND ASIAN PAPER WASP

Polistes humilis and Polistes chinensis

Paper wasps are smaller and slimmer than German and common wasps. The Australian paper wasp is brownish black or yellowish, and there may be yellowish or whitish bands on the abdomen. The wings are light brownish yellow with a blue tint. The Asian paper wasp is a similar size, but it is yellow and black in colour.

Both species of paper wasps build umbrella-shaped nests of wasp paper which hang by a single stalk from the branches of trees or eaves of houses.

TRAPPING WASPS

An effective wasp trap can be made by cutting the top quarter off a plastic drink bottle. Glue it back on upside down so the narrow opening faces down into the bottle. Half fill the trap with a solution of water, sugar and a little detergent. Wasps will fly in to feed on the sugar solution and drown.

FINDING AND DESTROYING WASPS

Paper wasp nests are umbrella shaped and are commonly found hanging from eaves or in trees and shrubs. The wasps can be killed by spraying with fly spray at night. (Do not hold your hand under the nest while spraying or dying wasps will drop on your hand and sting.) Once there is no sign of any live wasps, the nest can be enclosed in a plastic bag and snipped off its support with a pair of scissors.

German and Common wasps seldom move more than 200 metres from their nests. To find a nest, watch the flight paths of wasps at dawn and dusk when the angle of the sun highlights flying insects. Make wasps easier to follow by sprinkling them with flour or icing sugar so they are more visible. Wasps generally fly in straight lines, so it is easy to follow their flight path to the nest.

Once a nest is found, locate all of the entrances, taking care not to disturb the wasps. Return at night and tip a tablespoon of dry Carbaryl powder insecticide into each entrance (Carbaryl can be

obtained from any garden shop). When the wasps become active during the day, they will carry the poison into the nest on their bodies, killing all inhabitants within a few days.

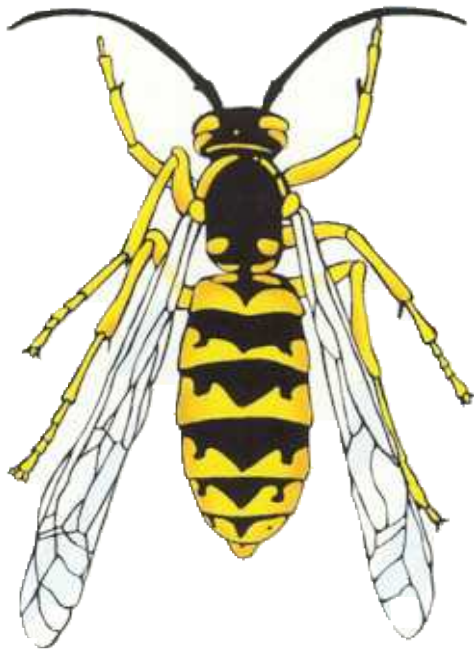
Note: Carbaryl is poisonous to humans. Always read the instructions carefully.

Alternatively, a 1.5 litre bottle of petrol may be poured into the nest through the entrance. Block

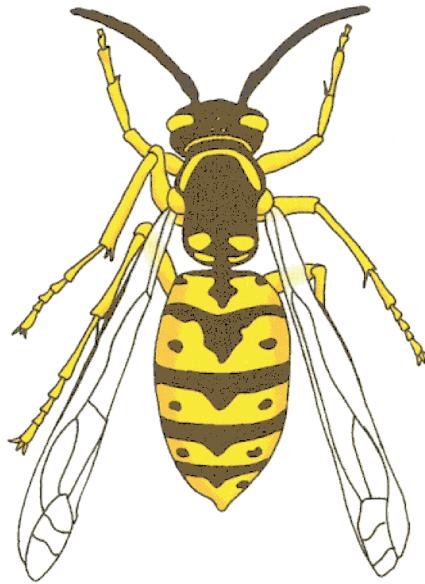
the hole so that the fumes don't get out and all wasps inside the nest will die. Do not light the petrol. These operations must be carried out at night.

If you feel uncertain about your ability to poison a wasp nest, contact a reputable pest eradication expert. The Northland Regional Council can supply you with a list.

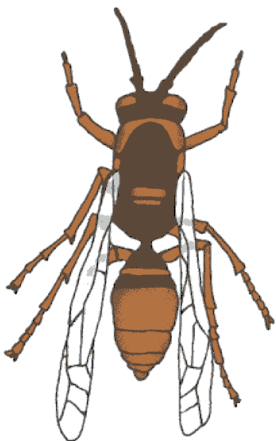
Common Wasp – Vespula vulgaris



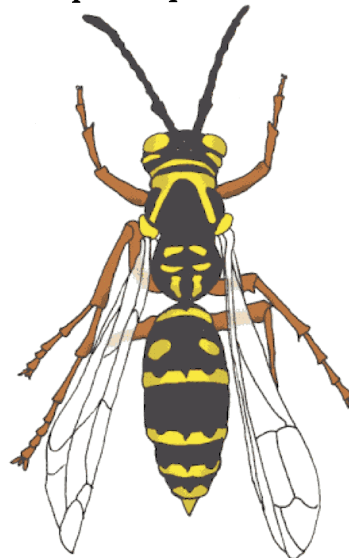
German Wasp – Vespula germanica



Australian Paper Wasp – Polistes humilis



Asian Paper Wasp – Polistes chinensis



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