

A Bug's Life

Paper wasps

Family: Vespidae; Genus: Polistes

Fun facts

- Social wasps that build paper nests
- Queen starts new nest each spring
- Nest consists of single layer of open cells suspended from a stalk
- Workers are all females and may sting to defend nest site
- Larvae fed caterpillars by workers
- Adults feed on plant nectar

Identification

Nesting sites: Umbrella-like nest in protected area or open cavity/space

Wasp: 3/4" to 1" long, spindle-shaped body, various colors, legs dangle in flight, hairless body

Note: European paper wasps are yellow and black, resemble yellowjackets, but with orange antennae

Management

- Leave nest alone if it does not pose a sting hazard to people
- Use labeled wasp spray, for quick knockdown on contact, follow label
- Treat at night, wear protective clothing, use red light/headlamp
- Check on nest the next day and repeat treatment if necessary
- Consider calling pest professional



Northern paper wasp



European paper wasp



Photos: J. Green