

A Bug's Life

Yellowjackets

Family: Vespidae; Genus: Vespula or Dolichovespula

Fun facts

- Social wasps that build paper nests
- Queen starts new nest each spring
- Nest consists of several tiers of comb within paper envelope
- Workers are all females and may sting to defend colony or food source
- Larvae fed caterpillars by workers
- Adults feed on plant nectar, or human food (meat, fish, pop, sugar, juice)

Identification

Nesting sites: 1) underground in old rodent burrows, 2) wall voids or cavities, 3) aerial nests

Wasp: Queen about 3/4" long and worker 1/2" long, yellow and black patterns and bands on abdomen (markings distinguish between species), black antennae, fine black hairs on head and thorax

Management

- Avoid nest during the day
- Leave nest alone if possible (if it is up in a tree or away from high traffic area)
- Consider calling pest professional to treat and eliminate entire nest
- Use commercial or homemade trap for adults (use meat or sugar as bait)
- Any approach or treatment should be done at night



Eastern yellowjacket

Photos: J. Green