

MOSQUITOES BIGGER THREAT THAN GIANT HORNETS

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Murder hornets. This is an unfortunate term being used for Asian giant hornets. At this time, Extension entomologists are working to assure people these hornets have not been found in Nebraska.

According to Extension entomologist Jody Green, only two dead giant hornets have been found in the state of Washington.

Calling these hornets murder hornets is a misnomer. They are no more of a murderer than other animals of prey. Just as lady beetles prey on aphids, Asian giant hornets prey on honeybees, granted a little more voraciously and this would be unfortunate for honeybees if giant hornets spread.

Asian giant hornets are not aggressive to humans but like some bees and wasps, if antagonized they will sting. Because of their size and potential for increased venom, their sting can be dangerous, especially if someone is stung multiple times and for people who are allergic.

If you see a large wasp in Nebraska, it will most likely be is a cicada killer wasp. These wasps are bright yellow and black and will not emerge until cicadas become active, typically in late June or early July.

Cicada killer wasps are solitary insects. There is one wasp per nest so they do not defend their nest and rarely sting unless stepped on or grabbed. Concerns of entomologist is people will kill any wasp they see in fear it is an Asian giant hornet. Most bees and wasps are beneficial insects to leave alone whenever possible.

Asian giant hornets have not been found in Nebraska and they're more of an issue for honeybees than for people. However, mosquitoes are abundant in Nebraska and their bite can transmit diseases like West Nile virus. People need to protect themselves from mosquito bites.

As we move into mosquito season, eliminate mosquito breeding sites of standing water near homes. These areas include children's wading pools, birdbaths, flower pot bases, clogged gutters, pails, cans, used tires and uncovered rain barrels. Anything that can trap and hold water.

Because mosquitoes breed quickly during summer, standing water should be drained weekly. Rinse and clean birdbaths on a weekly basis, pour water out of flower pot bases, clean gutters, remove cans and used tires and cover wading pools and rain barrels.

Check doors, windows, and window screens to see they are in good repair. Screens should be 16 mesh per inch or finer. Keeping porch lights off when not needed and replacing white light bulbs with yellow ones will reduce attracting adult mosquitoes.

Protect yourself when working outdoors. Wear long-sleeved shirts and full-length trousers. Work outdoors when mosquitoes are less active or when there is brisk air movement or strong sunlight.

Use repellents to avoid being bitten. The CDC recommends four active ingredients registered by EPA. These active ingredients have been reviewed during a registration process and approved for effectiveness and human safety when applied according to label directions.

These active ingredients are DEET and picaridin which are conventional repellents. Two other active ingredients, oil of lemon eucalyptus (PMD) and IR3535, are characterized as biopesticides since they are derived from natural, organic substances.

For information on these repellants, see our Residential Mosquito Control NebGuide found at <https://go.unl.edu/bpgg> .

