

Wasps

There are 7 species of social wasp present in the UK, as well as the more uncommon Hornet. Some species prefer to nest in roof spaces, others in holes in the ground. Some even choose to make their nest in hedges and trees. One thing these nests all have in common is that they are all made from wood pulp and that each nest is only active for one season.

Life cycle:

Hibernating Queens emerge in early spring and search for a suitable nest site. These are the large wasps that are often seen March – May. The Queen will then build a small nest, about golf ball size, and lay her first eggs. When these hatch, they will become Workers, whose role is to look after and enlarge the nest, and to collect food for the emerging larvae. All of these are female. As more wasps hatch out, so the nest grows in size. It is not uncommon for a nest in late summer to double in size in a week, if the conditions are right. The main diet of the wasps is insects, which they can be seen hunting on some plants. They are also very fond of sweet things and as well as fruit, will often be seen feeding on the sap of Lime trees for example.

Around late September the Queen is almost spent, having laid several thousand eggs. To ensure the continuation of her brood, she now lays some eggs which will develop into males, and others which are destined to become new Queens. When they emerge, the male's role is to fertilise these queens. The old Queen dies, and with her death, the nest is now in decline. The new, fertilised queens now look for hibernation sites, so they can emerge the following spring and begin the cycle again with their own nest.

The old nest, with no more eggs to hatch, begins to slowly die off. The first few hard frosts will finish them off.

Control:

Large wasps (Queens) are often seen in the spring, particularly during warm weather. If you find one indoors, and are able to, then the obvious advice is to kill it, either by swatting or by using a flying insect spray. The correct way to use a spray is to close the windows and spray into the room for a few seconds, then leave the room and close the door. Only do this, though if there are no pet birds or fish in the room. If you notice wasps flying into an airbrick, hole in the wall or in the ground, then it is possible to treat with a proprietary product designed for wasp's nests, and preferably containing **Bendiocarb**. It is safest to do this after dark.

Always read and follow the instructions on the container.

After treatment it is normal to see angry wasps flying around. This may be noticeable for several days, but if they are active after 4 days then the nest will require further treatment. There is no need for the treated nest to be removed

On no account attempt to treat a nest in the eaves or roof space, or if you know you have a bad allergic reaction to wasp stings.

If you discover an active wasp nest and you would like to have it treated, then contact Pest Control by telephoning 01923 776611.