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YELLOWJACKETS

Yellowjacket wasps are often pests in recreational areas in Virginia from late summer until early autumn. During this time of year wasp colonies have attained their largest size, and in the vicinity of numerous colonies, foraging workers may become serious pests as they search for food--usually food that is eaten or discarded by people. If a colony is disturbed, worker yellowjackets will aggressively defend their colony by stinging.

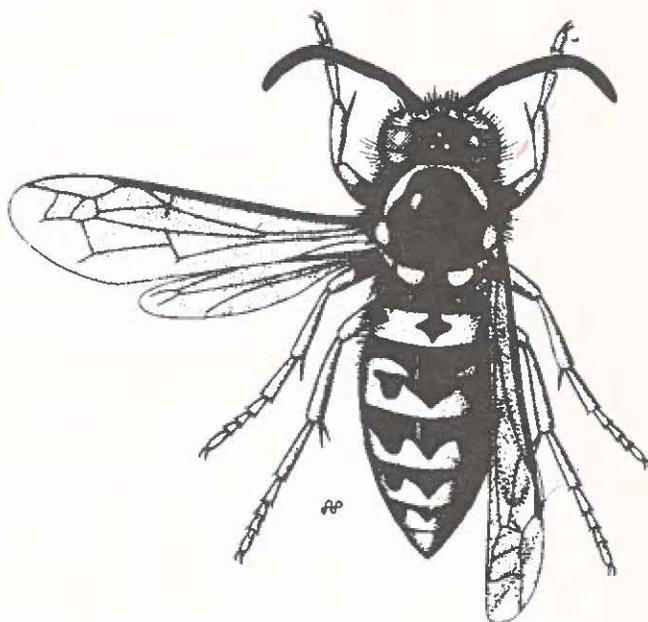
Like all wasps, yellowjackets are predators on a wide variety of insects and other arthropods. Yellowjackets are unusual in that workers also forage on foods consumed people, especially sweets and meats. Because of this habit, yellowjackets are frequently found associated with recreational areas, and may create a nuisance, and life-threatening stinging episodes.

Recent surveys indicate that between 0.5 and 1.0% of the population may be allergic to yellowjacket venom. For most of us a sting may be just a temporary painful experience, but allergic individuals a single sting may result in a serious reaction.

Management of Yellowjacket Foragers. Destruction of all yellowjacket in and around a recreation area is advised to reduce the possibility of a dangerous sting. Nests should be located during the day when the workers are going and coming on a regular basis; the location of the nest should be marked. Return late at



INSECT NOTES



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night to treat the nest with a liquid insecticide (diazinon, dursban, sevin--at 1.5%), or use gasoline (no smoking!). The destruction of individual colonies may not eliminate all the yellowjacket workers from an area in which food is available. This is because yellowjackets are capable of flying a mile from their colonies in search of food.

Effective management of yellowjackets can be achieved by: 1) rigorous sanitation, and 2) use of physical exclusion from a food source. The principle behind these practices is the denial of attractive food to the foraging worker wasps. If begun early in the summer and carried out through mid-autumn, proper sanitation will help to reduce the buildup of foraging yellowjackets in an area. Trash containers should be kept closed (lid) whenever possible; open containers should be emptied regularly (every few hours when large number of foragers are present). Use an aerosol insecticide to remove yellowjackets present around trash cans in order to empty them. Place a one-half or one-quarter section of no-pest strip to the inside of the lid of a closed trash container to kill the yellowjackets that may become trapped inside.

The following measures are of **no value** in reducing the number of yellowjacket foragers in an area:

- general spraying of an infested area
- electricuting devices employing UV light
- depletion trapping of workers

NEW COCKROACH PEST

There is a new species of cockroach in the U.S. that has reached pest status in Florida--and there are indications that it is also present in the Tidewater area of Virginia. The information on this insect is not complete at this time, but more will be available soon. Here is what is know about it so far:

ASIAN COCKROACH - The USDA Laboratory in Florida has called this beast the Asian cockroach; it apparently comes from southeast Asia. It looks very much like the German cockroach, but lives outdoors and flies very well. It is active at dusk, and inhabits grassy areas and leaf litter. If you have reports of such a pest from homeowners, please send specimens to Va Tech.

INSECT SURVEY



August Insects

The summer is drawing to a close and many late season pests are upon us. Because of the low rainfall and dry summer many pests will be more serious this year. From past years records these are some of the more commonly received insects at the ID Lab for this time of year.

Twospotted Spider Mites: are small, long-legged, spider like mites with two prominent spots on their back. These mites are not easy to see with the unaided eye, but the damage is easily seen. The leaves of the plant take on a mottled, sand-blasted appearance. The leaves first become a pale green, then yellow, and finally brown in severe infestations. Heavily infested leaves will be covered by a fine webbing. Twospotted spider mites damage a wide range of plants and are important pests of field and vegetable crops as well as ornamental plants.

The greenstriped mapleworm is a common summer defoliator on oak, maple, and boxelder. This caterpillar is characterized by its markings and horns. It is pale green with 6 or 7 dark green stripes. There are two horns on the thorax and four horns on the end of the abdomen.

The azalea lace bug is a pest of azaleas and feeds on the undersides of the leaves. The adult has lacy wings with brown and black markings. The nymphs are at first without color, later black and spiny.

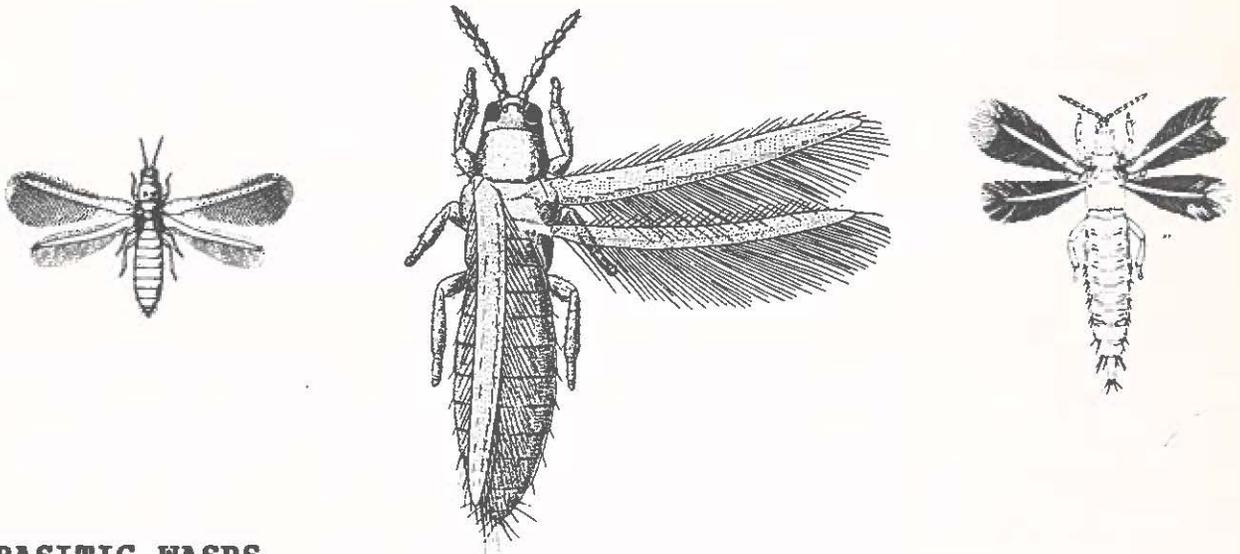
The walnut caterpillar is dull black, reddish in color and covered with long white hairs. This caterpillar feeds on a variety of trees including walnut, hickory, butternut, pecan, and occasionally on apple, peach, beech, honeylocust, sumac and willow.

Switching to field crops, a common late season pest is the stink bug. We have already received some beans damaged by this pest. Because of the dry weather this may be a serious pest in field crops and home gardens this year. Stink bugs have sucking mouthparts and range in size and color but all are usually a characteristic "shield" shape. The damage is very distinctive on beans. The pod will appear undamaged but the beans inside will be shriveled or misshapened. Also the beans will often have brown spots.

THRIPS

Thrips are minute, slender bodied insects, usually dark colored, and with small wings (some species are wingless). They have rasping-sucking mouthparts, and use these mouthparts to feed on plants or bite man. As plant feeders thrips attack flowers, leaves, fruit, or buds. A few species of thrips are predaceous on other insects and mites. Thrips are known to bite man, and on some occasions to be serious pests. They are most common in the summer months, frequently in grassy areas and around swimming pools. They are very small--but can hurt and leave a welt when they bite the skin of man.

Control of thrips when they are pests (biting) around the house or recreation area is not easily accomplished. A general spray for these insects should be directed to shrubs in the immediate area, and perhaps to the grass. Reapplication may be necessary in a week. Use insecticides labelled for use on ornamental shrubs or turf (Turcam is an example, but available to professionals only).



PARASITIC WASPS

The black wasps with the orange band or spots on the abdomen, and flying low over turfgrass will be seen in the next few weeks. Frequently, there are many of these wasps flying low over an area of lawn; they may be present for only a day or two. They do not sting, and usually fly off when disturbed. These parasitic wasps are seeking white grubs in the turf upon which to lay an egg. The egg hatches and the wasp larva feeds on the white grub, eventually killing it. Avoid spraying the lawn for these insects, they are beneficial and will not harm man.