

# YELLOWJACKETS

Yellowjackets are social insect that are considered beneficial which can feed on garden pests and pollinate crops through daily foraging.

If left undisturbed, yellowjackets normally should not be a problem. However, these wasps will defend their nest if they sense a threat to the colony.

When a nest is disturbed, yellowjackets can inflict multiple stings that are painful and may be life threatening for individuals hypersensitive to wasp venom.

Yellowjackets live in colonies which can be as large as thousands. Colonies are established annually and abandoned completely as they die off in the fall.

Queens overwinter and emerge in the spring to construct new colonies.



# AVOIDING GETTING STUNG

- Do NOT disturb the nest
- Don't go barefoot
- Don't swat with your hands
- Use lids on soft drinks
- Keep garbage away from eating areas
- If eating outside, check food before placing it in your mouth
- If a wasp is in your car, pull off the road and get the wasp out
- Avoid using items yellowjackets may be attracted to (perfume and other scents, hair spray, heavily scented suntan lotion, and brightly colored clothing)
- If exposed to large numbers of yellowjackets, leave the area quickly and use clothes to protect your eyes and mouth

## What To Do If You Are Stung

- If the stinger remains in your skin, remove it by scraping from the side with your fingernail
- Apply cold water or ice in a wet cloth
- Lie down and lower the stung arm or leg
- Do not drink alcoholic beverages
- Should you show signs of an adverse reaction (dizziness, difficulty breathing, wide-spread swelling, or other symptoms) contact a physician or call 911 immediately

Photo and cover by Sean McCann

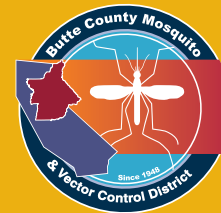
## Butte County Mosquito & Vector Control District

*Since 1948*

The District covers over 1600 square miles, and includes all of Butte County, except the small areas served by the Durham and Oroville Mosquito Abatement Districts, which were formed earlier. The District also includes the Hamilton City area of Glenn County. In April of 1994, "Vector Control" was added to the District name to reflect the additional disease surveillance and information now provided.

### OUR MISSION

The mission of BCMVCD is primarily to suppress mosquito-transmitted disease and to also reduce the annoyance levels of mosquitoes and diseases associated with ticks, fleas and other vectors through environmentally compatible control practices and public education.



5117 Larkin Road  
Oroville, CA 95965

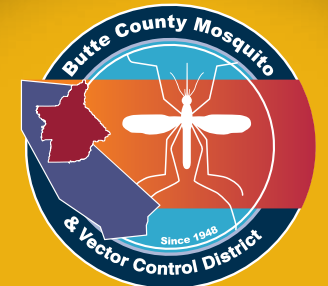
(530) 533-6038

or

(530) 342-7350

[www.BCMVCD.com](http://www.BCMVCD.com)

# YELLOWJACKETS



# YELLOWJACKET FACTS

Yellowjackets are medium sized black and yellow wasps (sometimes black and creme) that are often confused with honey bees, paper wasps, mud daubers, and other wasps.

Yellowjackets are made up of several species of wasps in the genera *Vespula* and *Dolichovespula*. These different species build nests in vastly different places. *Vespula pensylvanica* is a ground nesting species, often called the meat bee. *Vespula vulgaris* commonly builds its nests in rotting tree stumps in higher elevations. *Vulgaris germanica* is found frequently in urban areas, sometimes nesting in houses.



*Vespula vulgaris*

*Dolichovespula maculata*, the bald-faced hornet, builds paper nests attaching them to eaves of buildings or limbs of a tree.

Yellowjackets can be public health pests because they commonly nest and forage close to people. Because of their territorial behavior and affinity for human food, yellowjackets can restrict or prevent outdoor activities in areas such as campgrounds, picnic areas, and backyards.



*Dolichovespula maculata*

Unlike honey bees, yellowjackets do not leave a stinger behind, allowing them the ability to inflict multiple stings. Stings are painful and can be life-threatening in some cases.

# PAPER WASPS



The paper wasp is made up of mostly the *Polistes* genus. They are easy to distinguish from other bees, hornets and yellowjackets as

they are less aggressive and they build a hexagonal, open paper nest.

Markings and colors vary but include yellows, browns and blacks. The nest is constructed in protected areas above the ground. Common areas where nests can be found include walls and/or under the eaves of homes and buildings. Nest construction begins in the spring and construction and maintenance continues as long as the colony continues to grow.

Wasps gather fibers from old decaying wood or dead, dry plants, chew them up and mix the debris with water to make their gray paper nest. Populations in these nests rarely ever exceed 200.

## Paper Wasp Control

Paper wasps can become a nuisance when they build a nest near your home. Another common area where nests can be found is on gates, especially on metal ranch gates with hollows usually near the locks. Every attempt should be made to limit suitable nest sites:

- Repair holes in walls
- Caulk cracks in eaves
- Screen vents and louvers
- Caulk gate voids and hollows



# YELLOWJACKET PREVENTION

Reduce food and water available to yellowjackets by:

- Tightly covering garbage containers
- Properly maintaining compost piles
- Tightly covering can and bottle recycling bins
- Not leaving pet food outside
- Placing pheromone traps in early spring to capture queens

# WHAT THE DISTRICT CAN DO FOR YOU

The District will respond to reports of high yellowjacket activity. Mosquito and Vector Control Specialists will inspect the area and decide if control is appropriate.

Control measures may include placing traps or bait, treating nests with an approved insecticide, or physically removing the nest. All pesticide applications are made by state-certified technicians using Environmental Protection Agency registered materials.

**Call Butte County Mosquito and Vector Control District at (530) 533-6038 or (530) 342-7350 or by visiting [www.BCMVCD.com](http://www.BCMVCD.com) to report yellowjacket problems.**



# INSPECTION REPORT

A District employee has responded to your service request and investigated the pest problem.

## TREATMENT REQUIRED

YES  NO \_\_\_ nest needs to be marked  
\_\_\_ not a ground-nest  
\_\_\_ not yellowjackets

REMARKS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## AVOID TREATED AREA FOR 8 HOURS

Worker wasps that were foraging while control was taking place may return to the destroyed nest. Immature yellowjackets may hatch from treated nests and then disperse. For safety reasons, we suggest that you keep your family and pets away from the area for 8 hours. If nest activity persists after one week, please call our District office at (530) 533-6038 or (530) 342-7350.

**Thank you for your cooperation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**District Employee's Name**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date Time**