

Honey bee and European wasp control

Honey bees and European wasps are both capable of giving painful stings. Although they are similar in appearance, there are differences in their behaviour and where they live.

European wasps are a similar size and shape to a bee, have a bright yellow body with black triangle-shaped markings, yellow legs and two long black antennae. European wasps are much more aggressive than bees and are attracted to human food. They do not die when they sting and can sting repeatedly.

You are most likely to find a European wasp nest in the ground where they are concealed, such as: around the base of trees, in rubbish heaps or in uncovered compost heaps and grass clippings. You can also find them in roofs, wall cavities or in sheltered parts of a building.

To discourage European wasps from your property:

- Do not leave fallen fruit or food scraps lying around the yard.
- Make sure rubbish bins have tight fitting lids.
- Keep compost covered at all times.
- Keep swimming pools covered when not in use.

The best method of wasp control is to locate and destroy the nest using an insecticide registered for the purpose. The safest way to do this is to contact a licensed pest controller to treat the nest.

Honey bees sometimes make their way into homes while looking for a place to nest. Honey bees prefer dark and protected areas so wall cavities, chimneys, roof eaves and tree hollows often fit their needs.

Bees benefit the environment in many ways, however, it can be potentially dangerous to let a bee hive thrive near your home. In general, bees only sting to protect themselves or defend a nest.

Hives that are filled with honey located inside wall cavities may ferment over time, which can attract other insects and damage support structures.

To remove bees from your property, you should contact a bee keeper or apiarist to have the bee hive removed entirely.

For further information on bee and wasp pest control, visit the Department of Health and Human Services at www.health.vic.gov.au or the Victorian Apiarist Association at www.vicbeekeepers.com.au