

Yellowjackets and Wasps

Yellowjackets

Yellowjackets are medium-sized black wasps with yellow or white markings. There are two types of yellowjackets: one builds aerial nests, while the other builds subterranean nests. Aerial yellowjacket nests are built in trees, utility poles, or under the eaves of houses and are about the size of a basketball. Subterranean nests are constructed in rodent burrows, tree cavities or ground holes. Ground-nesting yellowjackets are often aggressive if their nest is disturbed.

Paper Wasps

Paper wasps are beneficial insects that prey on other insects and spiders. They are non-aggressive and tend to build softball-sized nests under the eaves of houses. These nests can often be taken down with a broom or water from a hose when there is no activity. Commercial sprays are also available for purchase at hardware stores. Occasionally, wasps and mud daubers may build a nest inside walls. In such cases, contact a private pest control operator to have the nest removed.

Don't Attract Yellowjackets

Foraging yellowjackets are not aggressive, but will sting if swatted at or accidentally touched. They may also become an annoyance. To avoid attracting yellowjackets and reduce the likelihood of being stung:

- keep food, especially meat or sweets, covered or wrapped
- cover sugar products such as sodas with a lid
- check food before putting into mouth
- avoid using perfume and other scented products
- avoid wearing brightly colored clothing
- move garbage away from eating areas
- eliminate standing water that yellowjackets may use for cooling the nest or drinking

Bees

The District does not control or eradicate honey bees, bumble bees, bee hives or migrating swarms on a homeowner's property or public property. Please contact your local beekeeper's guild for assistance.



Yellowjacket Control

Yellowjacket populations are best managed by removing attractants.

If a nest is discovered, avoid the area and keep children and pets away from the nest. Homeowners **should not attempt to remove a nest**. Contact a private pest control company or San Mateo County Mosquito and Vector Control District (650) 344-8592 for nest removal on your property.

Yellowjacket traps, such as those found at hardware or home improvement stores, are not an effective method to controlling yellowjacket populations.

If You are Stung

Yellowjackets defend themselves by delivering a powerful sting which causes pain, swelling and itching. Yellowjackets sting only when they sense a threat to themselves or their colonies.

If you accidentally disturb a nest and yellowjackets attack you, vacate the area immediately and use clothing to protect eyes and mouth. Apply cold water to stings and lower the affected extremity.

Allergy and Anaphylactic Shock

People who are highly allergic to yellowjacket venom may develop serious medical problems. For multiple stings or hypersensitive individuals, seek medical attention immediately. Do not wait for symptoms to develop. If any of the following signs or symptoms develop, **Call 911 immediately** to seek emergency medical response:

- Respiratory distress, wheezing, shortness of breath, chest pain or tightness
- Hives, itching or burning of the skin, or swelling of the limbs
- Swelling of the face, lips, tongue, or airway
- Dizziness, faintness, or unconsciousness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Weak, rapid pulse

San Mateo County Mosquito and Vector Control District

(650) 344 - 8592
1351 Rollins Road
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Monday-Friday
8a.m. to 4:30p.m.

www.smcmvcd.org

