Utah State University Extension electronic publishing


**A weekly question/answer column**

# How Can I Avoid Being Stung By Flying Insects?

*Jay Karren* answers:*

There are more flying, stinging insects around this year, and subsequently more people are getting stung. With the amount of rain and moisture we've had and the many plants with caterpillars and insect larvae to feed on, conditions are prime for the stinging insects. Many people blame their stinging encounters on "bees," but 95 percent of the insects aren't bees. They are yellow jackets and hornets. To avoid a (or another) stinging experience, consider these points.

- Yellow jackets and hornets are from the wasp family and can be easily identified because of their slick, shiny appearance. Yellow jackets are yellow with black stripes, and some hornets are black with white stripes. Honey bees and wild bees are fuzzy in appearance.
- Yellow jackets and some hornets are likely to crash your picnic and are quite aggressive in their quest for food. They especially like the sugar found in soda pop, fruit and sweets as well as the protein in meats. Keep foods covered to discourage them from joining you. Wild bees and honey bees generally only bother humans if they are stepped on or if you bother them as they collect nectar.
- Yellow jackets are scavengers in garbage cans. Be sure lids are tight on the cans. You can use a spray containing pyrethrum or a pyrethroid (an imitation form of pyrethrum) inside the can. The insects will also flock to apple trees, searching for whatever fruit has dropped on the ground. Pick up dropped fruit daily. You can also make a wasp trap near the trees by putting something sweet in a container with a pesticide containing pyrethrum or pyrethroid.
- Hornets usually build paper nests in trees or corners. Yellow jackets like dark confined areas and live in similar nests in the ground or in a wall. The nests are where they produce queens for next year, and as fall comes, the females are stimulated to produce queen cells. Subsequently, they have an increased need for food and the peak of their population appears this time of year. With the first frost just around the corner, however, most of them will be frozen.

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