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New European Wasp

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This newly introduced European wasp has a native range from Europe to China. As a group, these wasps have a high rate of reproductive increase and are excellent invaders. They have successfully invaded the new world—independently in South America and North America—and are rapidly expanding their range into the United States.

The wasp is characterized by building open nests above the ground. They build these nests in the ends of open pipes on children's swing sets, and in open ends of clothesline poles. They are also found under decks, in storage buildings, on or around all types of machinery that is not used very often, in bushes and shrubbery, and even doorways are an excellent habitat for the wasp and her nest.

This European wasp probably first invaded Utah during the period of 1999 to 2000. It is speculated that the wasp entered the Salt Lake area in shipping crates or packing material from Europe. They were quite abundant in many Utah counties during 2001. They are being found all over the United States. They are a *Polistes* wasp that resembles our native yellow jackets. Its name is *Polistes dominulus*, but we call it the New European wasp (not its official name).

When disturbed, these wasps are likely to attack. This wasp was reported in North Logan in September, 2001. An individual there had two acres of raspberries, but found it difficult to get workers to pick the fruit because of the frequent stings from wasps. In this situation the wasps built open nests in the top of canes. If left undisturbed, the wasps are usually not aggressive to humans or animals, but if aggravated, they may sting. Unlike bees, a European Wasp can sting multiple times.

On September 28, 2001, the European wasp was identified in the Heber area. These wasps were located in a garden feeding on ripe strawberries. They can ruin a considerable portion of the fruit and make picking extremely difficult. This wasp is attracted to a variety of sweet foods and various meats. They are attracted to many foods during picnics or parties where food is consumed outdoors. They can be quite aggressive and a nuisance during these activities.

Pyrethroid sprays will kill them, but the wasps are just too numerous and most of the sprays cannot be used on eatables. They are so new, we don't know much about them. Currently, Carbaryl (Sevin) and Malathion are both registered for caneberries, but we are not sure how effective they are on these wasps. When treating nests, it is suggested that the individual wear bee protection or contact a pesticide applicator.

Currently, we are not aware of biological control methods. We will continue to search for methods of control. Since these wasps are relatively new to Utah, we have limited information about them.

