

Summer 2020

# PestGazette

*Brought to you by* **Thomas Pest Control**



**A**s summer begins to heat up, be sure to inspect your home for the key signs of termites and eliminate favorable conditions that may help termites claim territory of your house. Do a “walk about” around your home’s exterior perimeter, paying special note to the foundation which is a primary access point for termites to enter a structure. Check for improper drainage around the foundation that could result in standing water and wood decay. Remove vegetation next to or on the foundation that could make it difficult for termite inspectors or yourself to get a close look at the foundation wall. Inspect closely for any mud tubes that termites use to tunnel into your home and feed on wood. You may also see swarming termites as another clue to termite presence. Finding small, translucent wings of termite swarms in spider webs, windowsills or anywhere else around your home is potentially a sign that termites are in your area.

If you are able to, access structural wooden members below the home in a crawl space or basement, also inspect for termite evidence in these places that are common for termite activity. The sooner that termite activity is detected, the greater the chances are of minimizing costly damage to your home. If you suspect you may have termites or want an expert to inspect your home for termite evidence, give us a call first thing so we can handle any potential infestation and prevent further damage. □

**Call Today!**  
**(704) 847-3468**



A large, detailed close-up of an Asian Giant Hornet's head. The insect has a reddish-brown thorax and head, with large, dark, segmented mandibles. Its eyes are large and dark, and its antennae are visible. The background is dark and out of focus.

# ASIAN GIANT HORNETS AND OTHER STINGING INSECTS



Aside from Asian giant hornets which have garnered much attention lately, other native or established hornets and wasps like yellow jackets and bald-faced hornets can be of concern around the home. Stinging insects send more than half a million people to emergency rooms each year and most of these stings are caused by wasps and hornets. Summer is the time when these stinging insects increase in numbers in both rural and urban environments across North America.

## Asian Giant Hornet

The Asian giant hornet, dubbed “murder hornets” by the media, have gotten a lot of recent attention because of their introduction into the United States. As of May 2020, only four specimens of Asian giant hornets have been found in Washington State and a colony was destroyed across the border in Canada. They are the largest species of hornets in the world, reaching up to 2 inches in size. They are particularly concerning for honeybees and their keepers because a few Asian giant hornets can destroy an entire honeybee colony in a few hours by literally cutting their heads off with their mandibles. The hornets then will use the honeybee bodies to feed their young in their nests. There is not much concern about this species right now because it has not established in the United States and there is no evidence of it spreading beyond Washington.

## Yellowjackets

Yellowjacket queens mate in the fall and spend the winter months overwintering in a protected spot, often in structural voids. When they emerge the spring, the queens begin ▶





# Flies Around Garbage and Dead Animals: Blow Flies

**B**low flies are a diverse group of flies that generally having a metallic sheen to their bodies and are larger than house flies in size. They may be black, blue, coppery green, olive green, or bronze in coloration. All adult blow flies have blunt mouthparts and do not bite. However, blow fly larvae (called maggots) feed on dead and decaying organic matter and help to break it down. In addition to meats and flesh, they often infest wounds of sheep, deer, cattle, and other animals and can also be attracted to garbage and other refuse.

Blow flies deposit eggs in wounds or on dead carcasses. The fly larvae that hatch from the eggs feed on decaying flesh or matted hair. When you see blow flies in your home, it usually means that there is a carcass of some animal nearby to the fly sighting. Perhaps a mouse, rat, squirrel, bird, or some other type of urban wildlife has died within the structure, inside a crawlspace, behind a wall void or in an attic space. Be sure to call us at the first sign of flies in your home. □



Blow Fly

building a nest where they will raise the first generation of their brood. Once these wasps reach adulthood, they are ready to take on the responsibilities of a worker wasp: expanding the nest, foraging for food, and protecting the colony. Adult yellowjackets are pollinators, searching for nectar and other sweets. However, they also collect protein-packed foods like insect grubs or even your picnic lunch, which they bring back to the nest and feed to the larvae. The pattern of yellow markings on the thorax and abdomen, the insect's torso, are unique and can be useful in differentiating between species. Nests are typically below ground, but some species will nest aerially. Aerial nesting yellowjackets make use of trees, attics, and other places that offer some confining spaces. The ground nests are particularly troubling because they can easily go unnoticed. Children playing catch in the yard, or someone mowing a lawn may inadvertently disturb the nest and incur the unfortunate wrath of these stinging pests. Trust us, if you get too close to a yellowjacket nest, they will let you know! Do not risk your health trying to treat or remove nests yourself; do the right thing and call us today to come and take care of it for you and your family.



## Bald Faced Hornets

Have you ever seen a large gray wasp nest about the size of a football made of paper like material hanging down from a tree? These are bald-faced hornet wasp nests. The wasps are extremely protective of their nests and will sting repeatedly if disturbed. They are one of the few hornets with a white face (if you want to get close enough to take a look – this is not highly recommended!) Do not attempt to remove these wasps and their nests yourself. We have the knowledge, experience, and proper personal protective equipment to do this correctly and safely. Please contact us, your pest professional experts, if you spot one of these nests forming in or around your home or yard. □





## Carpet Beetles in the Windows

**C**arpet beetles are common fabric pests that occur throughout the United States. Outdoors, adult carpet beetles are found on flowers from late spring to early summer feeding on pollen and nectar. They can be carried into the house unintentionally on flowering plants or may enter the home through improperly sealed doors and windows. You may find these beetles on windows and windowsills because they are attracted to lights.

Once indoors, carpet beetle larvae can cause feeding damage to fabrics, furnishings, and clothing that contain natural fibers. They may also feed on other animal products, dead animals and insects, animal fur, and some stored products. As carpet beetle larvae feed, they can leave behind clues such as frass (insect droppings) and cast (shed) skins that indicate the presence of an infestation. Other signs of carpet beetles may include surface damage and irregular holes in fabrics, or uneven areas in brushes and furs. In extreme or neglected infestations, a buildup of old larval skins can even lead to skin or respiratory irritation caused from persistent contact or prolonged inhalation of the larval hairs. Therefore, it is important to contact a pest management professional at the first signs of carpet beetles to eliminate the infestation as quickly as possible.

There are four species of carpet beetles commonly found infesting fabrics and carpets: the black carpet, common carpet, furniture carpet, and varied carpet beetles. Differentiating between species is important to finding the primary source of an infestation and is the key to eliminating these pests. However, species identification can be difficult with different color variations and patterns and is best left to your pest management professional. No matter the species, carpet beetles can cause considerable damage to fabric goods. Remember to contact your pest management professional at the first signs of an infestation to eliminate the population and to minimize the harm these pests may cause. □

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