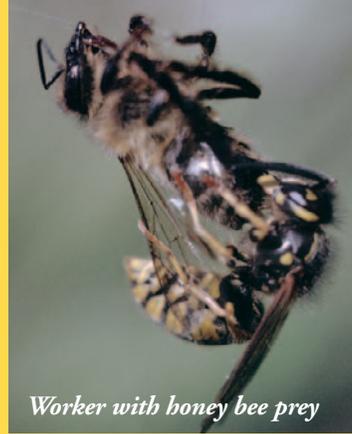




*Entrance hole to a nest*



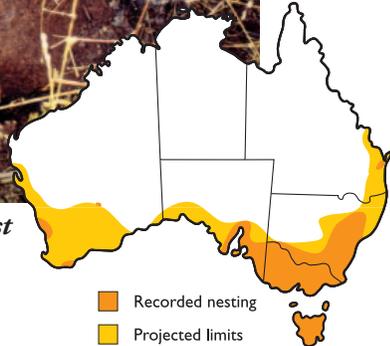
*Exposed mature nest*



*Worker with honey bee prey*

## The European wasp

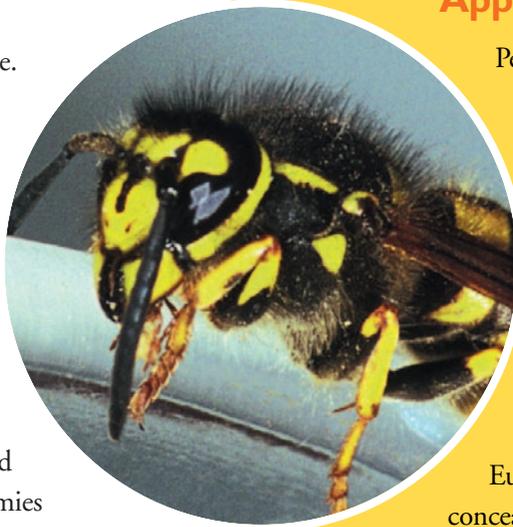
Recorded nesting  
Projected limits



The European wasp has progressively spread through Canberra since first being recorded here in 1984. Because of its nesting and foraging habits, they thrive in suburban areas where they frequently come into contact with people.

The European wasp is renowned for its painful sting that can require medical treatment. Unlike bees, European wasps are able to sting repeatedly; therefore people with allergies should take extreme care.

Due to the weather conditions and the abundant availability of food – and possibly because the wasp was introduced to Australia with none of its natural enemies – this species has thrived.



## Appearance

People can identify a European wasp by its size and colour markings – they have prominent black and yellow stripes with black spots down their abdomen. They are about the same size as a honey bee with yellow legs and long black antennae.

## Nests

European wasp nests are always concealed and are often found under ground in the soil or above the ground in rockeries, wall or roof cavities and tree stumps.

Nests can be found by the constant stream of wasps flying to and from one particular location.

It is important all nests are located and destroyed to prevent further establishment of this pest in the ACT.

If people think they have found a wasp nest – and confirmed it with the **European Wasp Hotline** – they should have it destroyed by a professional pest controller.

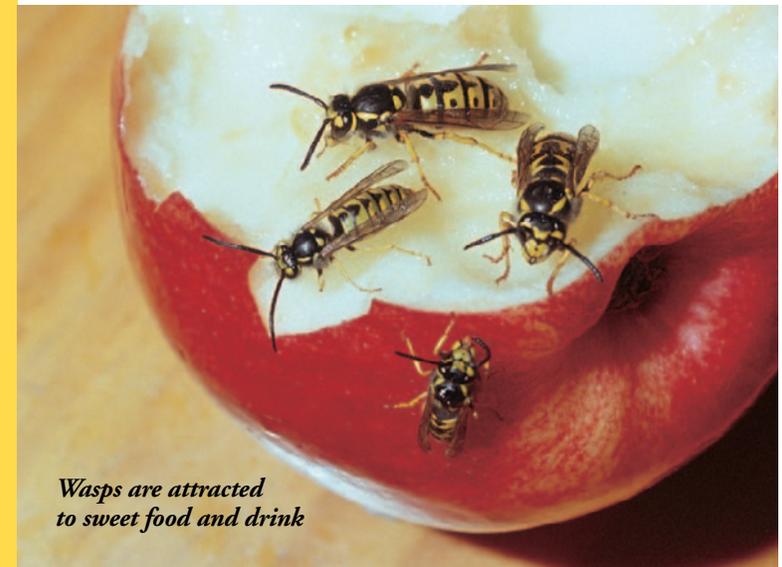
People should never attempt to treat the wasps themselves as the nests can be home to many thousands of wasps, which are fiercely protective of their nest.

## What to do if stung

After being stung by a European wasp, the skin becomes hot and red with some swelling and a central red spot appears where the venom was injected.

Pain, which can be severe, may continue for up to several hours, but usually subsides after a day. Itchiness may, however, persist for several days.

Recommended treatment includes an ice pack and a pain-relieving anaesthetic spray to reduce pain and swelling.



*Wasps are attracted to sweet food and drink*



*Worker with blowfly prey*

### Allergic response

Symptoms of a major allergic reaction are indicated by an itchy rash distant from the sting site, tightness of the throat and difficulty in breathing or swallowing.

Swelling associated with a sting in the mouth or throat will cause breathing difficulties and possible choking. Medical help must be obtained immediately – call **000**.

### Personal protection

European wasps are attracted to water, sweet drinks and food, making them a pest during outdoor activities such as barbecues and picnics.

Covering the food will reduce the risk of being stung. It is important not to leave cans of drink open and unattended, as a wasp may get in and sting the mouth or throat when people have a drink.



It is best to use a straw in the can or drink from a glass. Be especially vigilant with young children when wasps are around.

### Further information

For advice about European wasps (along with other insect and spider species), please contact the **European Wasp Hotline 6162 1914** or email: [sprad@netspeed.com.au](mailto:sprad@netspeed.com.au).

# EUROPEAN WASPS in CANBERRA

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*Hibernating queen wasp*

