

Pest Profile



Photo credit: By Jim Kalisch, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Common Name: Yellow Jacket Wasp

Scientific Name: *Vespula spp.*

Order and Family: Hymenoptera: Vespidae

Size and Appearance: Currently, there are 16 species of yellow jackets distributed across the United States, which are fairly similar in size and appearance. The wasps range in size from about 10-16 mm in length, with the queens being about a quarter inch longer. The abdomen is usually banded in yellow and black and they are known for always holding their wings longitudinally when at rest. The worker pattern on the wasps can vary by species with bands featuring the occasional white and red coloration. Several specimens are generally needed in order to ensure identification at species level.

	Length (mm)	Appearance
Egg	1 mm	1 egg is laid per gallery cell. Larval and pupal stages take place entirely in gallery. Up to 120,000 cells in a single nest.
Larva/Nymph	10-18 in length depending on instar and species	White, cylindrical. Remain in cells either in underground nests or above ground paper nests through pupation.
Adult	10-16 mm long	Distinct yellow and black banding on abdomen, differs by species, holds wings longitudinal at rest.
Pupa (if applicable)	12-18 mm long	Light colored, made of final larval skin. Formed inside of gallery cell.

Type of feeder (Chewing, sucking, etc.): Chewing

Host /s: *Vespula spp.* consume various arthropods, many of which are pests. They are considered beneficial for this reason.

Description of Damage (larvae and adults): Though they do a positive service by consuming pest species, if a nest is nearby a home, their aggressive nature leads to stings for humans and pets. Therefore, they are considered a nuisance pest.

References:

Smith, E.H. and Whitman, R.C. (2007). *Bees, Hornets, and Wasps-Yellow Jackets*. In *NPMA Field Guide of Structural Pests*. (2.15.1). National Pest Management Association International.

Grissell, E.E., Fasulo, T.R. (November 2013). *Yellowjackets and Hornets*. University of Florida, Department of Entomology and Nematology. Retrieved on July 30th, 2016 from http://entnemdept.ufl.edu/creatures/urban/occas/hornet_yellowjacket.htm