

Beneficial Species Profile



Photo credit: Maggie Heumann, UNL

Common Name: Yellow-Legged Paper Wasp

Scientific Name: *Polistes spp.*

Order and Family: Hymenoptera: Vespidae: Polistinae

Size and Appearance: Brownish-reddish in color with long, yellow legs; slender and “hornet-like” with a pointed head. They have a short 1-segmented pedicel (waist) between the abdomen and thorax. Two visible pairs of wings are present with the hindwing containing a small lobe near the back end. The clypeus, or plate on the front of the head, is usually pointed at the top. The 1st abdominal segment is conical. The middle tibiae (4th leg segment from the body), usually has 2 apical spurs.

	Length (mm)	Appearance
Egg	<5mm	Laid in an open-celled nest of wood pulp and saliva; nests can vary in size from small to very large depending on the size of the colony
Larva/Nymph	2-10mm	Cream colored and maggot-like
Adult	13-25mm	Brownish-reddish in color with long, yellow legs; slender and “hornet-like” with a pointed head; A short 1-segmented pedicel between the abdomen and thorax; Two visible pairs of

		wings are present with the hindwing containing a small lobe near the back end; The clypeus, or plate on the front of the head, is usually pointed at the top; The 1 st abdominal segment is conical. The middle tibiae (4 th leg segment from the body), usually has 2 spurs projecting from it
Pupa (if applicable)	~5mm	Pupae occurs inside the sealed cell of the nest. Exarate, with free appendages that are not glued to the body, in shape on the inside.

Type of feeder (Chewing, sucking, etc.): Chewing mouthparts as both an adult and larvae

Host/s: Nest created usually in sheltered areas such as eaves of buildings, cliffs, or outbuildings; very common in areas of human development.

Description of Benefits (predator, parasitoid, pollinator, etc.): Adult is a pollinator and also preys on garden pests such as caterpillars, cicadas, and beetle larvae; adult often chews prey and feeds it to its young.

References:

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