

Pest Profile



Photo credit: University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Common Name: Bald-faced Hornet

Scientific Name: *Dolichovespula maculata*

Order and Family: Hymenoptera, Vespidae

Size and Appearance:

	Length (mm)	Appearance
Egg		Bald-faced hornets exhibit haploid-diploid sex determination. Males are haploid, meaning they have an unpaired set of chromosomes and females are diploid and have a pair of chromosomes. Unfertilized eggs become males and fertilized eggs become females.
Larva		Larvae are legless and grub-like in appearance and pale in color, except for some little pigmentation around the mouth. The larvae develop in hexagonal cells.
Adult	Worker: 12-15 Queen: 18-20	The bald-face hornet gets its name by its mostly black color, but mostly white head. About half of the anterior segments of the adults are black (terga I-III), with the rear half of the abdomen marked with white. Males have a white margin on the first abdominal segment. For both male and females, there are black and white patterns on the thorax and first antennal segment. Males have long antennae that have 13 segments while the females have 12. They are a robust and short-waisted wasp with a mostly hairless body. When the wasp is at rest, their wings fold lengthwise over their body.
Pupa (if applicable)		In the pupa, the adult features are clearly visible with the legs and wings loosely attached to the body. The brood cells are capped during the pupal stage.

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

Host/s: Adults prey on other yellowjackets and flies. They also feed on nectar and sap.

Description of Damage (larvae and adults): The adults are considered pollinators, but compared to honeybees and bumblebees, they are not as effective due to their smooth bodies. They also prey on a large range of insects, specifically flies, including deer and horse flies.

The female bald-faced hornet has a modified ovipositor on their abdomens, designed to be stingers, whereas the males do not, and therefore males cannot sting. These stingers are not barbed, and therefore, they can sting multiple times without taking any damage. Not only can their stings be painful, but the stings can also cause inflammatory and allergic reactions and rarely can cause anaphylaxis. Being that a colony can consist of a several thousand wasps, multiple stings can result in life-threatening injuries. Since these wasps can occasionally build aerial nests in garages, sheds, crawl spaces, dense shrubs, or other enclosed areas, they can be in close contact with people.

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