



Yellowjackets

Yellowjackets can be serious stinging pests in late summer and fall when they forage for food at picnics and outdoor venues.

Medium sized, 1/2 inch long, Black/yellow/white wasps

Western Yellowjackets (*Vespula pensylvanica*), European Yellowjackets (*Vespula germanica*), and Common Yellowjackets (*Vespula vulgaris*) can be found in Santa Clara County. They normally eat other insects but will feed on carcasses and forage around garbage bins and picnic areas. Nests are found in rodent burrows, house walls and attics.

Yellowjacket Look-alikes

Bald-Faced Hornets (*Dolichovespula maculata*) eat flies and other insects, including yellowjackets. They make aerial nests, usually in trees.

European paper wasps (*Polistes dominulus*) eat flies and other insects. Nests are umbrella-shaped with open cells and occur both outdoors and inside structures.

Nests

Yellowjackets are social wasps that live together in large paper nests they make from wood fibers and saliva. The nests can be underground, in structures, or in trees. A nest is a series of suspended combs with cells (15 to 10,000) where the young are reared. Nests are built in early spring, abandoned by winter, and rebuilt the following spring.

DO NOT DISTURB NESTS. Yellowjackets will defend the nest in numbers and can sting multiple times without dying.

If you discover a nest:

- Avoid the area and keep children away
- Vector Control will treat nests in areas with risk to the public. Otherwise, notify a pest control company.

If You Are Attacked

- Avoid provoking them, remain calm, do not swing or strike
- Cover your face and move away from the colony, continuing to an indoor location or dense vegetation.

First Aid if Stung

- Wash with soap and cold water
- Protect wound with bandage
- Watch for signs of allergic reactions (i.e. difficulty breathing)

Hypersensitive individuals should immediately get medical care. Do not wait for symptoms.

Prevention in Outdoor/Backyard Recreation Areas

Deter yellowjackets and their stings by:

- Keeping garbage containers closed and away from eating areas
- Eliminating standing water
- Covering sugary drinks and checking for wasps before drinking
- Clearing dirty dishes immediately
- Hanging traps away from the center of the property

Trapping

Can reduce the number of workers but will not eliminate yellowjackets. Commercially available traps lure workers into a container they cannot escape. **Place traps away from food and people.**

