



# Activity Sheet No. 4

## What you need to know about wasps

### Introduction to wasps

There are four species of wasps in the Bay of Plenty region. The **German wasp** and **Common wasp** are well known and cause many problems with their aggressive behaviour. **Asian paper wasps** are common in coastal areas in the Bay of Plenty. They also love gardens in town and the edges of forest and bush. The **Australian paper wasp** is much less common but likes the same places as the Asian paper wasp.

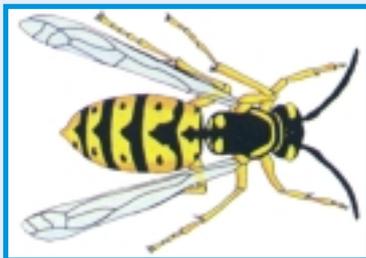
**German and Common wasps** are the real 'baddies' of the wasp world. They sting people and attack honey bee hives. They also steal food and take over the homes of some native bugs. They also kill and eat some native bugs, like spiders, and even young birds. German and common wasps normally nest underground, or in the hollows of trees, walls or roofs of buildings.



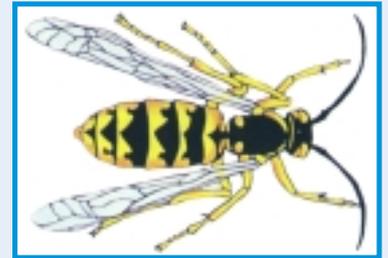
**Asian and Australian paper wasps** are much less aggressive than the other two, but will defend their nests if annoyed. They will eat some garden insects and even chew through wood. They use the wood fibres to make their nests which are like paper mache.

The nests are like bells and usually hang from trees or buildings. The wasps build little hexagonal (which means 6 sided) cells to crawl in and out of. The nest is like a multi storey building full of little workers, but with no elevators!

**The German wasp** has been in New Zealand since the late 1800's and is a bit bigger than a honey bee.



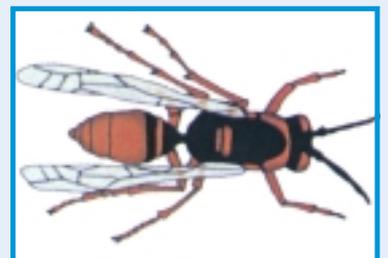
**The Common wasp** is a more recent visitor and is very widespread. It looks very like the German wasp but has no black dots on its abdomen.



**The Asian paper wasp** was first discovered in Auckland in 1979 and is now throughout the North Island. It is a bit smaller than the German or Common wasp and flies with its legs dangling beneath its body.



**The Australian paper wasp** has been here since the 1880's. They are the smallest of all the wasps and are black and reddish brown.



### What do you do if you discover a wasp nest?

If you find the nest in a district council reserve or park you can report it to your council. They will make sure the nest is destroyed.

If you find the nest on Department of Conservation land you can tell the closest DOC office or visitor centre.

If the nest is at your place, or a friends or family members place, then tell an adult.

**If you are allergic to insect stings don't go near the nest or try to destroy it yourself.**

### First aid

If you accidentally disturb a wasp nest be very careful as you may get stung. Wasps like bright colours so wear light coloured clothing. Wasps are scavengers and are attracted to food.

If you visit the bush, particularly in summer, be prepared for wasps.

You can take antihistamine cream for your skin and tablets that you can swallow. These can both reduce the swelling if you are stung. Ask your chemist which is best for you. Ice will also help reduce the swelling. People who are allergic to insect stings have to take adrenaline injections with them.

Stings in the mouth or on the neck are really serious whether you are allergic or not. There's not much room in the throat for swelling so you need to act immediately. **Don't wait to see if you are allergic to the sting**—take an antihistamine tablet straight away and find a medical person as fast as you can.

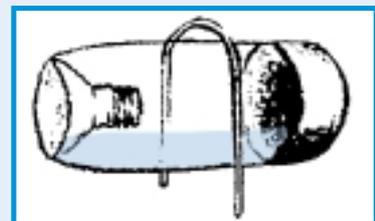
### Wasp traps

Large numbers of wasps can be killed with a very simple trap.

1. Cut the top quarter off a plastic soft drink bottle.
2. Invert the top and glue it back on so that the narrowing opening faces down into the bottle.
3. Half fill the trap with a mixture of water, sugar (1 tablespoon per 100mls) and a little detergent (1 teaspoon).
4. Wasps will be attracted to the sugar and will land on the surface of the water. The detergent breaks the surface tension so the wasps sink and drown.



On the left—cut the top quarter off the bottle. On the right—the finished bottle



**Tell us how it is going - phone Sarah 0800 368 267  
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