

PestGazette



Keep an Eye out for Large European Hornets

You may be enjoying a nice fall evening outdoors with family, swinging on the porch and getting some much-needed relaxation. When you suddenly see a large flying insect with a huge stinger congregating around your porch lights as the sunlight fades. This is not uncommon during the fall season when many people encounter European hornets that are attracted to porch and deck lights around the home.

The European hornet is a social wasp, meaning that it will build a nest and live among its family members and coordinate work among each wasp inside of the nest. This wasp is one of the largest hornets in North America, whose queen can measure up to 1.4 inches long. The European hornet is larger than a yellowjacket and can be identified by an abdomen (rear part) that is black or brown with yellow markings. Females possess a stinger, however this species is not particularly aggressive unless defending their nest, and care must be taken when in its proximity, as stings can be quite painful. As with most stinging insects, European hornets will sting in self-defense, such as when stepped on. ▷

DON'T LET BAT BUGS DRIVE YOU BATTU



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While impressive due to their size and loud sound, European hornets are in fact much less aggressive than some of their smaller relatives, like yellowjackets. European hornets are typically a woodland species, building nests in hollow trees. Unfortunately, they sometimes mistakenly nest in your attic, hollow walls, crawl spaces, barn, or birdhouses. Nests are covered with a thick, brown envelope (paperlike) material composed of coarse, decayed wood fibers that are quite fragile. During the summer, these hornets can fly at night and are often attracted to lights. They sometimes fly into the beam of a flashlight (bumping into the glass cover) or appear near lights or lantern lights at campsites. Occasionally, some fly against windows, causing people to believe they are trying to get inside to attack them, and inspiring several wonderful horror film-type stories.

These hornets can cause problems in your yard by girdling twigs and branches of numerous trees and shrubs including lilac, birch, and dogwood. These plants are sometimes killed by their actions. Other complaints involve nesting too close to human-occupied structures, presence in picnic and campgrounds, eating ripe or near-ripened fruits, and raiding domestic honeybee hives. The best control measure is to have the nest destroyed during dusk when the majority of hornets are inside the nests. Although these hornets can be beneficial by feeding on live insects such as grasshoppers, flies, and yellow jackets, the European hornet can sting repeatedly in defense of the nest entrance. If a nest is built too close to your home we highly recommend you call us, your pest management professionals, to remove your European hornet problem. □



Bats can sneak into homes through doors, windows or other small openings around a home and will occasionally set up their roosts in attics. Oftentimes, people discover bats are in their home when they hear squeaking or rustling noises in the ceilings and walls, see their droppings, or catch bats emerging outside the house at night to find insects to eat.

Aside from the nuisance bats can cause, they can also bring in some unwanted insect guests into homes like bat bugs. Bat bugs look very similar to bed bugs and require a microscope and trained eye to identify the differences. They also feed on blood and will bite humans, although their primary host is bats. They are often misidentified as bed bugs, but if there has been a bat presence in a home and especially if bats have recently been evacuated, it's important to get the insects identified. While the two species are very similar, bat bugs will often be found wandering around in the open and congregating near ceilings and in the top floors of buildings. If you think you have bat bugs in your home, give us a call to inspect your home for bats and any of their unwanted insect guests. □



Orb Weaver Spiders Around the Home

As the leaves begin to change and the weather cools, spiders become very busy around the home also preparing for winter. Orb weaver spiders are one of the most common spiders found around homes and build conspicuous, orb-shaped webs that are hard to miss around porches, eaves, and other open areas.

Orb weaver spiders survive the winter as eggs and in the spring they hatch from their eggs as spiderlings and disperse. By the time fall comes, these spiders reach maturity and become large – making them much more noticeable and their webs more of a nuisance. Some of the species grow large in size and are striking orange, yellow and red colors that can seem alarming. Thankfully, these spiders are mostly harmless and will try to run away if you disturb their web.

If you are alarmed by these large spiders around the home, give us a call to come remove them from your house. We can inspect the home for other spiders as well and help keep your home web-free. □



Boxelder Bugs and Lady Beetles

Two common pests you could find entering your home this fall are boxelder bugs and Asian lady beetles. Both are brightly colored, red and black insects. Boxelder bugs are more slender than Asian lady beetles and are longer in length, about $\frac{1}{2}$ " long compared to lady beetles that are $\frac{1}{4}$ " long. Lady beetles are round in shape with black spots on their outer wing covers. Asian lady beetles have a "M" or "W" (depending on which way you flip them) marking on the white portion of their thorax, right behind their head. The larvae of lady beetles look entirely different than the adults and have elongated, segmented bodies that are orange/red and black in color.

Both boxelder bugs and lady beetles are attracted to the warm, southern sides of buildings during cooler fall temperatures. You may find large aggregations of these insects under the eaves of your home outside or on the upper side of the building. They will enter homes through cracks and crevices around windows, walls, doors, and around foundations. While both species are considered nuisance pests, they can leave unsightly red stains indoors and emit unpleasant odors. Once indoors, you can vacuum pests but do not smash them to prevent staining. Contact us to help you pest proof your home and help keep pests out of your home the rest of the year. □