

Wasps are better than their reputation

17 species of the so called state-forming wasp exist in Germany. However, there are only six species in populated areas and only two of them are disturbing towards humans, the „Common wasp“ (Paravespula vulgaris) and the „German or European wasp“ (Paravespula germanica).

Feral animals, including wasps are protected under the nature protection law of Germany. Humans are not allowed to kill them without a special reason. Hornets, wild bees and all types of bumblebees are also under special protection. Actions taken on their nests always need specific permission from the local nature conservation authority.

Wasps and hornets are very important to our ecosystem. A hive of wasps can eat up to 3,000 flies, midges, caterpillars, moths, spiders and other small animals a day.

Furthermore they pollinate plants, dispose of fresh animal carcasses and function as a basic food resource for other animals.

Wasps only live for one summer. In Autumn they leave their beautiful nest of chewed wood and saliva and die.

In wintertime no wasps are in the nest and You can put the nest in Your compost heap. Only young queen wasps search for a safe habitat to hibernate. In the following spring they do not return to their old nest, but with a lot of effort, set up a new hive.



A hornet visits the ivy-blossom.

It is not always necessary to destroy or relocate a wasp nest. With professional advice more than 80% of wasps nest can be saved by moving the entrance hole or encasing the nest.

TIPS

Simple do`s and don`ts that make it easier to observe these interesting animals.

Preventive measures for outside

- ▶ Wasps do not like the smell of lemons or clove oil. Cloves put into lemons are a good repellent.
- ▶ Feeding places for wasps are a good distraction. For example, fill a saucer with apple juice and sugar and place well away from the dining table.
- ▶ Smells attract wasps – never leave meals uncovered, this also works against flies.
- ▶ Whenever outdoors: cover your drinks and use very thin straws.
- ▶ Capture annoying wasps in an upturned glass – in contrast to bees, wasps aren` t able to inform each other about possible food supplies.
- ▶ During the summer months do not walk barefoot in meadows.
- ▶ When out with small children and babies use a cloth over the buggy to protect your child and always keep dirty mouths clean.

Rules of behavior when being next to a wasps` nest

- ▶ Important are slow and silent movements, so the wasps do not feel attacked.
- ▶ Do not be in their flight path near the entrance hole of their nest.
- ▶ Do not blow into the entrance hole.
- ▶ Do not shatter the area of the nest: inside of it are small brood cells, in which the offspring hangs headfirst, so they could easily fall off – so Beware! Wasps defend themselves and their offspring.

Some additional information

- ▶ Beaded curtains and streamers in front of terrace doors and fly-screens in front of windows protect from insects.
- ▶ Hornets also hunt in the night. If one gets stuck in your room, turn off the lights, so it will find its way out easier. A glass and a piece of cardboard will help to catch them and to set them free again.
- ▶ Light clothes work calming.
- ▶ Wasps are attracted to strong scents, such as hairspray, perfume, aftershave and also sweet food.

If you`re bitten: Stay calm!

Black-yellow is dangerous. The sting of a wasp is only life threatening if a person has an allergic reaction or if they are stung more than 100 times per kg of their body weight. For example, a healthy person weighing 60 kg can absorb 6,000 stings. So from a medical point of view, the panic-fueled fear that arises by only seeing a wasps` nest or a single hornet is for no reason.

- ▶ People who have allergic reactions after a wasp sting often get rashes over their body, breathlessness, symptoms of circulatory shocks (vomiting, quick drop in blood pressure and increased pulse). They should always have their emergency health card and emergency medication with them. They should keep their legs in an upward position, should stay calm and warm and not be left alone until a rescue service arrives.
- ▶ Apart from that: As an immediate measure, spittle helps. Two other options are either a heat treatment with 51°C (123,8°F) or the cooling of the spot to minimize a swelling.
- ▶ If stung on the mouth or throat, it is essential to suck ice cubes and wait for medical support.
- ▶ Help in case of emergencies:
Poison emergency number Mainz: 06131 19240
Emergency rescue service: 112

Wasps and Hornet advisory service by BUND

In Darmstadt you can receive help and advice from Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz (BUND) Landesverband Hessen e.V., www.bund-darmstadt.de

- ▶ Relocation, advice, training: Brigitte Martin, Dreieichweg 11, Arheilgen, 64291 Darmstadt, Fon 06151 37931, brigitte.martin@bund.net
- ▶ Advice: Ulrich Kroeker, Arheilgen, Untere Mühlestraße 35, 64291 Darmstadt
Fon 06151 373704, ulrich.kroeker@bund.net
- ▶ Relocation, abatement: Kleinlogel GmbH Schädlingsbekämpfung (director Björn Kleinlogel), Fon 06151 44658, www.bluekill.de
- ▶ More addresses of wasp advisors at environment agencies such as UNB Landkreis DA-DI, www.ladadi.de, search for wasps or list of wasp advisors

What wasps need to survive

The best areas for wasps to live and survive are meadows with streams, rivers or lakes, forests with dead or old trees or organic gardens.

Wasps need nutrition high in protein for the upbringing of their breed; therefore they hunt insects and even feed meat from dead animals. This is why they function as a pest control and work against the expansion of diseases. Adult wasps need carbohydrates, which they preferably take from blossoms or sweet fruits. The most peaceful hornets prefer nectar and sap; they stay away from plum cake.

Wasps prefer blossoms that don't have a strong scent but where they can easily get the nectar. For example parsley, yarrows, bellflowers and plants like blooming ivy or virginia creeper.



In Germany only the Median wasp (*Dolichovespula media*) builds her nest outdoor in trees, bushes or under the rain gutter on the roof.

Other wasps build their nest indoor in closed boxes, in a garden shed or in a garage. Remember: Nests in dark rooms, you don't see, often are the Common or the German wasp.

Depending on their species, wasps do need rare natural environments to build their nests, for example old trees, holes in the ground or thick hedges. The endangered Median wasp (*Dolichovespula media*) especially needs these areas to build its freely suspended nest. Wasps- and hornetboxes are also gladly accepted. They should not be set up near bright light sources, because the nocturnal hornets could be irritated.

Hornets and wasps need your help to live and sustain their habitat

Your donation helps to fund:

- ▶ Trainings for wasp and hornet advisors in how to relocate nests.
- ▶ Protective clothing.
- ▶ Nesting boxes for wasps and hornets.
- ▶ Materials needed for a relocation of a nest.
- ▶ Information material for adults, teenagers and children: The protection of species should be in everyone's interest.
- ▶ Display cabinets with additional information.
- ▶ Show gardens for and with wasps and hornets.
- ▶ Purchase, sustaining and building up of habitats.

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with numerous links for more information

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Images: Erik O. Martin, Hornet on helping hand and ivy, nest of Median wasp; **Concept and Design:** Brigitte Martin
Supported by: Björn Kleinlogel, Biologist (Darmstadt)

Wasps – useful and rather harmless

Helpful Information and advice for
working with wasps and hornets

