

# BUGS & BLIGHTS

[Bed Bugs]



## Bugs and Blights

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**Before I start on wasps:** All the wasp workers die off with the first hard freeze. Those in particularly protected places such as the attic, still die because there is little food, and there's no "reason" to live without the queen. They do not reuse their nests. Large yellowjacket nests in homes and cadavers should be removed where practical so that carpet beetles don't move inside once they've scavenged the remains. The exception (there are exceptions to every rule including this one) is mud daubers that winter over as larvae in the mud tube. For specific homeowner IPM and pesticide recommendations, check current listings in WSU Pestsense: <http://pep.wsu.edu/pestsense/>

**Yellowjackets and bald-faced hornets** (also a yellowjacket, not a true hornet) are most visible this time of year and cause the most pain. Colonies are large, males and queens are being produced, they start eating sugary and fermenting fruit, and they are just plain cranky. Foraging workers are not usually a problem if seen searching plants (and car bumpers or picnic tables and garbage cans) for bugs, and meat. However, mess with their nest and they become fierce home security agents. In most situations, if the homeowner is just now noticing them, they should give them room and the colony will be abandoned and all workers die with the first hard freeze. Only the mated queens will overwinter and start fresh the next spring. <http://cru.cahe.wsu.edu/CEPublications/eb0643/eb0643.pdf>

**Paper wasps and mud daubers** are fairly docile by comparison to yellowjackets. It is possible to coexist under most circumstances. Both are excellent predators. Paper wasps are yellow, long and slender, while mud daubers are dominantly black with yellow markings. They have a long slender section between thorax and abdomen.

**Yellowjackets and paper wasp nests.** What's the difference? Both do make their brood comb of wood fibers. But in another common name irony, it is the yellowjackets that wrap their nest in a large paper wrapper, while paper wasps make small open comb nests; and mud daubers daub mud. Both nest in attics, under eaves, and other out of the way places.

**Bed bugs in the news** and between sheets, in mattresses, behind pictures, stuffed furniture, theater seats, coats closets, hotel rooms and generally anywhere people congregate. They can live many months without a blood meal. The young are tiny, and adult, double the size of a sesame seed; a sunflower seed if it recently fed. Grab a beverage of choice, grab your laptop and spend the next nice day web crawling through bedbug sites and news articles. <http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7454.html#IDENTIFICATION>

*From top to bottom: 1. Yellowjackets in trap (photo: sjcollman). 2. Baldfaced hornet (Photo: Johnny N. Dell, Bugwood.org). 3. Mud dauber and nest (Photo: Howard Ensign Evans, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org). 4. Looking up at a paper wasp and nest (Photo: Whitney Cranshaw, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org). 5. Adult, center and young, upper left (Photo: Gary Alpert, Harvard University, Bugwood.org).*