

European Paper Wasp

Polistes dominulus, also known as the European Paper Wasp, is a fairly new exotic importation, which is becoming more of a nuisance in our area. First recorded in Massachusetts in 1980, in New Jersey in 1986, Connecticut in 1993 and Michigan in 1995, it has now made its way west. The nests are common under eaves and inside outbuildings. They prefer nesting in cavities and can be found in holes in the ground as well as bird boxes/houses. For a good picture of the European Paper Wasp see: [Cornell News](#) or European Wasp Control Program.

For most people the sting of the European Paper Wasp is painful, but not life threatening. The sting is not more potent than our American counterpart, but can be more harmful because when they sting, they release a chemical which 'marks' the victim, attracting other wasps to sting the same person. The bad news is that these wasps can sting multiple times. They have large nests, so instead of ten to one hundred, you could have thousands, if not tens of thousands of wasps attacking you if you stumble upon their nest. They can be very dangerous if swallowed, so cover cans and bottles when outdoors. They are attracted to sweet food and meat. Your food is their food, so keep it covered.

These wasps deter birds from using their boxes and they eat the bird's food – caterpillars. They love caterpillars. This is not good if you want butterflies in your yard. However, on the plus side, for you vegetable gardeners, they remove cabbage butterfly larvae from broccoli.



Wasps Invade a Birdhouse



Wasp Nest Inside Birdhouse

If you spot a nest, it is best to let the professionals deal with it. Again, to stress the point, these wasps can be quite aggressive.

Good book sources for additional info are:

ISBN 0198549474

Natural History and Evolution of Paper-Wasps

By S. Turillazzi and M.J. West-Eberhard (Eds.)

Published 1996, 400 pages

ISBN 08014 9066

The Social Biology of Wasps

By Kenneth G. Ross and Robert W. Mathews (Eds.)

Published 1991, 678 pages

Bibliography

[The European Paper-Wasp: A New Threat to Cavity-nesting Birds Is Coming!](#)