



BEES, WASPS AND HORNETS

Honeybees

Honeybees are one of the most useful insects in the garden, largely responsible for plant pollination. They are hairy insects, about 1/2 inch long, and amber and black-striped. They nest in great numbers inside hollow trees and swarm by the hundreds, particularly in spring, often gathering on tree branches. They may appear to be dangerous, but they rarely sting, and the swarms leave on their own in a short time.

Other Bees

Bumblebees are rounded, hairy, yellow and black, from 1/2 to 1 inch long. They nest underground in small colonies.

Burrowing bees make individual underground nests, with many nests clustered together in the same area. Burrowing bees resemble yellow jackets, but can be distinguished from them by their dull colored bands of black and brown or gray. These bees rarely sting.

Leafcutter bees and carpenter bees are tiny, only about 1/4 " long. Leafcutter bees are hairy with gray and black bands, and carpenter bees have yellow and black bands. Both bees hollow out plant stems to make their nests, particularly favoring roses, raspberries and blackberries. Leafcutter bees cut distinctive circular pieces from leaves to use in their nests. Neither type of bee is likely to sting.

Wasps & Hornets

Yellow jackets are the most likely to sting. They are about the size of honeybees, 1/2 inch long, but they have bright bands of yellow and black. They are also less hairy than a honeybee. Nests are usually in the ground, but may also be in a pile of brush, a hollow tree, or the wall of a house. These nests contain many insects. By late summer, their numbers may be up to several thousand.

Bald-faced hornets are stinging insects about an inch long. They are black with white heads. They live in large paper nests in trees and shrubs, and will guard these nests day and night.

Paper wasps are the large, thin wasps that commonly build honeycombed nests under the eaves of houses. They are unlikely to sting unless provoked.