

## Pests of the Month

### Bees and Wasps



Honey Bee



Yellowjacket



Paper Wasp

You may not think so with the cool winds blowing, but spring is right around the corner. With those warmer temperatures comes spring fever and everyone wants to be outside. One result of spring fever can be a trip to the medicine cabinet for some baking soda or meat tenderizer for those all too common wasp and bee stings. I asked a group of about sixty students to introduce themselves to the class by telling a story that involved an insect and by far, the majority of the stories involved some tale of horror of being stung.

Well, it is true, millions of people are injured from venomous insects each year, and it is important to know what to do when a sting occurs. Detecting a sting is usually not a problem. The prick from the sting, okay maybe it feels more like a bullet searing through your flesh than just a prick, is usually followed by burning, redness and swelling around the site. Many times the area around the sting will become a knot that lasts several days. While realizing that you have been stung isn't usually a problem, knowing what caused the sting can be. Bees and wasps are often confused, but their stings may need to be treated differently.

Wasps, including yellowjackets, paper wasps and hornets can sting multiple times while honey bees can only sting once. (Other types of bees usually don't sting, but when they do, should be treated like wasp stings.) Honey bees leave the stinger in the skin via a handy barb. Here is where the treatment difference comes in. Immediately after the sting, the stinger needs to be removed. Attached to the stinger is a poison sac that continues to pump venom into the sting site for several minutes. This stinger should not be pulled out; rather, it should be scraped off. A stiff sheet of paper or a credit card works well for this. A wasp sting does not require scraping.

After you have identified the offending organism and removed the stinger, be sure to observe the patient for any signs of allergic reaction. If the patient has a history of allergic reactions, shows signs of severe swelling or has trouble breathing, a physician should be contacted immediately. If the patient shows no signs of distress, the sting area can be soothed by applying a paste of baking soda or meat tenderizer and water. An antihistamine may also be given to relieve the itching caused by the sting.

Remember, many of these insects are beneficial and are only considered pests when we venture too close.

### Sting Prevention

Okay, now we know how to treat a sting, let's discuss a few tips on how to prevent or at least minimize being stung.

- Keep sweet items covered. Bees and wasps, like children, are attracted to sweets. This includes recycle bins and garbage cans that contain soda cans or fruit scraps. It is recommended that all outside garbage cans be covered with a self-closing lid.
- Don't walk barefooted on the playground or in the yard. I know it is fun to feel the cool grass on your feet, but bees and wasps are nectar collectors, so they are often close to the ground.
- Don't harass the wasps. The temptation is there, but when a paper wasp nest is spotted, it is best to leave it at a distance and have a professional come in and remove it at night.

### Inside This Issue

- 1 **Bees and Wasps**
- 1 **Sting Prevention**
- 2 **Carpenter Bee Classroom**
- 2 **IPM Quick Review**
- 2 **Meet your Pro**

## Mystery of the month . . .

Speaking of bees, can you guess which Brevard County School (BCS) is home to the Carpenter Bee Classroom?

### ● CARPENTER BEE CLASSROOM ●



Carpenter Bee Classroom



Carpenter Bee – *Xylocopa*



Galleries where the eggs are laid

### **Surfside Elementary - Home of the Carpenter Bee Classroom!**

Carpenter bees resemble bumble bees but have a shiny, metallic colored abdomen. These bees nest in wood and the females will use the same nest, or gallery for generations (see photo above).

Carpenter bees make good parents. The female collects pollen and mixes it with regurgitated nectar. She packs the bottom of the nesting chamber with this nutrient rich food and then lays a single egg on top. She then caps the chamber with chewed wood pulp and makes a new chamber for the next egg. Each nest has 6-8 baby bees growing inside. Keep an eye out for newborns. In Florida, these bees have two generations per year, one in February or March and another in the summer.

Carpenter bees generally are not a problem. The males may aggressively dart or hover near anyone approaching a nest, but fear not, they lack a stinger and are harmless. The females do have a stinger, but are less aggressive and rarely sting.

For more information about wasps and bees, please visit <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.

## **Integrated Pest Management Quick Review**



The School IPM team has been visiting the Brevard IPM pilot schools for nearly a year now and we are seeing great things! This time of year there are many things on our minds, especially with the FCAT quickly approaching, so here is a quick review of IPM.

IPM is a process for achieving long term, environmentally sound pest suppression through the use of a wide variety of technological and management practices. Control strategies in an IPM program extend beyond the application of pesticides to include structural and procedural modifications that reduce the food, water, harborage, and access used by pests.

### **Points of IPM:**

- Monitoring and identification of pest populations
- Education about pests and pest conducive areas
- Reducing conducive conditions by eliminating food, water, and harborage.
- Targeting of the least hazardous pesticides on an “as needed” basis to areas not contacted or accessible to children, faculty, or staff.

For more information about IPM in schools, please visit <http://schoolipm.ifas.ufl.edu>.

### **Meet your Pro: Kellie Stephens**

Many of you have met your School IPM team at in-service trainings or on one of our visits. However, you may not have had the chance to meet your local pest professional.

Communication is the key to a successful IPM program, so this month, I would like to introduce **Kellie Stephens** of Truly Nolen. Kellie has been in pest management services since 1983 and has been working with the BCS for 8 years. Kellie visits each of 34 BCS each month and prides herself on doing a good job. Kellie is a knowledgeable professional and loves the relationships she has built with her clients. Next time you see Kellie in your school, please say hello and let her know if you are having any pest problems. She is a wealth of knowledge and will be able to advise you on how to deal with the situation. Remember, pesticides don't prevent pests, people must prevent pests.



**Jeannie McHellen, Earl Lewallen, and Kellie Stephens at McNair Magnet**



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