

The common and German wasp are common throughout Britain. They are social insects forming colonies inside nests specially constructed in soil, barks, roof spaces and in cavities in trees and walls. They are therefore frequently associated with domestic housing.

### **Life cycle:**

The fertilised queen wasp emerges from hibernation around mid-April and searches for a suitable site. From chewed bark and dried timber, mixed with saliva an initial cell is built. This is about the size of a golf ball.

The queen lays between 10 and 20 eggs and this first brood of sterile workers start enlarging the nest and providing food for the subsequent eggs. Ultimately by late summer the normal wasp nests will contain from 3,000 to 5,000 individuals and be up to 30cm across.

With the onset of cooler weather, the workers and mates may become tired and their feeding on ripe fruit can produce a “tipsy” behaviour, leading to aggression towards anyone interfering with them. The cold winter weather kills

off all the workers and males and only the queen survives.

### **Control:**

Locate the nest and apply a residual insecticide. In general non-excitant sprays based on carbonate or organophosphorus, active ingredients, carbaryl benidocarb, idofenphos etc., are to be preferred to Pyrethroid based products.

It is pointless destroying the nest until a colony is established; this usually occurs sometime in June/ July. The queen may abandon the nest or be killed by a drop in temperature which will result in the nest being destroyed.

### **Dusts:**

In general dust formulations applied to alighting areas or nest entrances are likely to be even more effective than liquid sprays. Again they should be applied to entrance sites preferably using injection tubes.

### **Aerosols:**

Most domestic types are not suitable and may cause the wasps to become excited.

### **Self treatment:**

If you intend treating the nest yourself please:

- read the instructions and label on use of the insecticide.
- follow the instructions.
- wear gloves, long sleeves, goggles plus any other protective equipment recommended.
- if the nest is at a high level, use a safe set of steps. Do not use a stool or chair.
- only treat when activity at the nest is at a minimum, i.e. a cool evening.

**Please note:** The council does not offer a wasp treatment service. Please contact our preferred contractor, SDK Environmental Limited, on 01753 538819 or another pest control company of your choosing.

Residents in receipt of full council tax and or housing benefit can have a treatment booked with our preferred contractor, SDK Environmental Limited, at a discounted rate. Please contact pest control on 01727 819440 for further details.

# Wasps

## Fact sheet

