



WASPS, BEES AND BUMBLE BEES

Basic information

WASPS are very important to ecology. They play a vital role in limiting the populations of thousands of other insect species. For simplicity, hornets can be considered as very large wasps.

All female wasps can defend themselves and their nests by using their stinger to inject venom. Males do not have a sting. No species will attack a human except in defence.



The difference between wasps, honeybees and bumblebees are the yellow bands on their abdomens. The "wasp waist" is very noticeable.

Unless a wasp's nest is in a dangerous position, it is best left alone; the first frost will kill it. While there are products that may destroy a nest by spraying the entrance, it is always advisable to let a professional Pest Control Officer with the proper protective clothing and equipment deal with



a wasp's nest. The treatment can be dangerous. So see "**Pest and Vermin Control**" in the **Yellow Pages** to get professional advice. **Beekeepers do not have access to the necessary sprays.**

BEES: there are basically two types of bees, namely social and solitary.

SOCIAL BEES (HONEY BEES) are the only social bees in the United Kingdom and are honey producers and important pollinators.



A honeybee's abdomen is usually striped with dark brown bands. They may have some hairs on the thorax between the wings. **Honeybees are a protected species.**

A honeybee dies if it uses its sting, so they will usually only sting in defence of the colony. Honeybees swarm; it is their natural way of increasing their numbers. If you find a swarm, leave it alone and ask the local Council Pest Control Officer to put you in touch with a local beekeeper or Association. The beekeeper will remove the swarm if possible.

Only beekeepers are permitted to give an order to destroy bees.

SOLITARY BEES Solitary bees are by far the largest group with over 200 species in the UK.

They have such a varied lifestyle that it is not possible to cover them all. Most do not sting, any that could do not because their stings are too weak to penetrate us. If your garden, house or outbuildings present the right accommodation requirements then you may be blessed with solitary bees, which come in all sizes and shapes and colours. They are also good pollinators.



The two most noticed are mortar and mining bees. They look much like Honey Bees but usually are lightly haired. Adult mining and mortar bees

only live for a short time each year normally from April-July. These bees often get confused with wasps in the early spring. However they are not aggressive and do not sting. Make or buy a nest if you want to persuade mortar bees from using a wall.



BUMBLE BEES are also pollinators but do not produce honey.

They seldom sting unless they have been very highly provoked and they warn first by raising a leg. They are easily recognisable: they are larger than honeybees and have fur all over. Depending on the species, they usually have distinct coloured tails (mostly white or orange).



These insects are members of a protected species and their colonies must not be destroyed. Destruction of a colony can lead to a heavy fine. It is impossible to move a colony without great cost and difficulty. The colony will die out at the end of summer anyway

and the nest can then be removed.

