



# about ... European Wasps

## Community Update

February 2018

### Identification

The European wasp, *Vespula germanica*, is not native to Australia. Wasps are 12-15mm long (about the size of a Honeybee), bright yellow with black markings including arrow-shaped marks down the middle of the abdomen with paired black spots on the sides. Wings are long and transparent, antennae black and legs mostly yellow.



### Habitat

European Wasps live in urban areas, mallee, cliffs and grasslands. The nest is nearly always concealed, commonly underground or in a roof or wall cavity.

### Wasp prevention

Preventing wasps building their nests is the best form of control and can be achieved quite easily with some good home maintenance and the use of wasp control products.

To help prevent wasps:

- Ensure rubbish bins are closed and make sure that any composting is carried out in containers (European wasps often build their nests underground).
- European wasps eat protein (meat) but they are also highly attracted to sugary foods, so ensure food is not left unattended, cover exposed food and use clear drink containers or a straw rather than drinking directly out of cans or bottles.
- Spray the boundary of your home; and
- Avoid leaving uneaten pet food or dog bones outside.

### Control of individual wasps and wasp nests

European wasps generally travel 50-250m from their nest, leaving a range of approximately 500m. If wasps are sighted, carefully check your property for a nest. It can be very difficult to see the actual nest as they are usually located either underground or in wall cavities. To help locate a nest moisten a piece of cotton wool soaked in juices from a meat tray, observe the direction the wasp heads and repeat as required until the nest is found.



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Most often, the only indication of their nest location is the steady stream of the wasps coming and going from the location. If a European Wasp nest is located on your property, do not disturb the nest, contact a pest control operator.

For removal of individual wasps, standard aerosols are the best option. Make sure the wasp gets a good dose and importantly, quickly leave the area as they tend to get angry when sprayed. Wasp stings hurt and they can be dangerous!

### **Danger to Humans and First Aid**

European Wasps normally only attack humans if their nest is disturbed. When stung a systemic reaction may occur. In some individuals, wasp, bee and ant stings can cause an allergic reaction (anaphylaxis), but this is relatively uncommon. Effective treatment is available, which involves known bee/ant/wasp sting allergy sufferers carrying a special kit when outdoors.

### **Further Information**

For information on first aid treatment contact the Poisons Information Centre on 131 126.

If you require further information, please contact Council's Community Biodiversity Officer, Glenn Dean on (08) 8539 1167 or by email at [g.dean@murraybridge.sa.gov.au](mailto:g.dean@murraybridge.sa.gov.au)

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