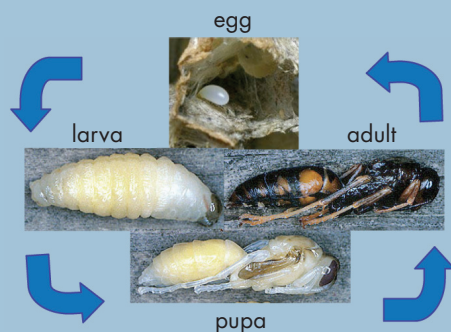


## SACRAMENTO-YOLO MOSQUITO AND VECTOR CONTROL DISTRICT

Yellowjackets and paper wasps are beneficial insects. They feed their young numerous insects that ordinarily damage shade trees and crops. They also kill countless flies and various other pest insect species.

While yellowjackets and paper wasps are often confused, they have some distinct differences. Yellowjackets are relatively short and stout compared to paper wasps. Paper wasps have longer, more slender bodies and dangling legs. Yellowjacket nests are spherical and are enclosed in a papery envelope with a small entrance hole. Paper wasp nests are usually suspended from eaves or porch ceiling and look like tiny umbrellas filled with hexagonal cells.

### Life Cycle



SACRAMENTO-YOLO  
MOSQUITO  
& VECTOR  
CONTROL  
DISTRICT

FIGHT THE  
**BITE**

### OFFICE LOCATIONS AND HOURS OF OPERATION

#### Sacramento County

8631 Bond Road  
Elk Grove, CA 95624  
Phone: 1-800-429-1022  
Fax: 916-685-5464  
Web site: [FIGHTtheBITE.net](http://FIGHTtheBITE.net)  
Hours: 7:00 am to 3:30 pm

#### Yolo County

1234 Fortna Avenue  
Woodland, CA 95695  
Phone: 1-800-429-1022  
Fax: 530-668-3403  
Web site: [FIGHTtheBITE.net](http://FIGHTtheBITE.net)  
Hours: 7:00 am to 3:30 pm

# YELLOWJACKETS AND PAPER WASPS

SACRAMENTO-YOLO  
MOSQUITO  
& VECTOR  
CONTROL  
DISTRICT



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# SACRAMENTO-YOLO MOSQUITO & VECTOR CONTROL DISTRICT

## YELLOWJACKETS

Yellowjackets are social insects that live in a nest containing workers, queens and males. Two species are common in the Sacramento region, *Vespula pensylvanica* and *Vespula germanica*.

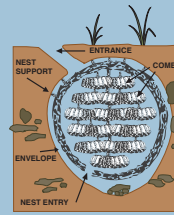


### Appearance

Yellowjackets are medium sized black wasps with yellow markings and black or yellow antennae. Workers are usually about a 1/2 inch long and appear short and stocky while the queen is larger at about 3/4 of an inch. Workers are often confused with honey bees, but in contrast, are not covered with dense hair on their bodies.

### Nest

Depending on the type of yellowjacket, they build aerial or subterranean nests. Nests are built of wood fibers and consist of multiple stacked combs completely enclosed by a paper envelope, except for a small entrance. Nests of most species are placed underground in rodent burrows or other soil cavities.



### Behavior

Most of the time, yellowjackets are not aggressive and will not harm you if you stay out of their way. However, when a nest is disturbed, yellowjackets will swarm and can inflict multiple stings that are painful and may be life threatening to individuals hypersensitive to the venom.

## PAPER WASPS

Paper wasps are social insects that live in colonies containing an alpha female, workers, and males. The European Paper Wasp, *Polistes dominulus*, is common to the Sacramento region.



### Appearance

The European Paper Wasp is often mistaken for a yellowjacket because of its yellow and black coloration. One distinct difference is the orange-tipped antennae. Like other paper wasps, it is narrow-waisted, and during flight, its legs trail below in an extended fashion.

### Nest

Paper wasps build nests of wood fiber and consist of a single comb not enclosed by an envelope. Nests of the European paper wasp are often less than 100 cells in size but may be constructed of over 400 cells. This wasp appears to be quite flexible in selecting nesting sites, including roof eaves, within meter boxes, bird houses, outdoor grills, benches and within shrubbery.



### Behavior

European paper wasps are more easily provoked than other wasps, and will more readily sting when someone nears their nest. An unsuspecting homeowner may be stung, for instance, when attempting to change an outdoor light bulb, opening a gate, or while gardening. European paper wasps, like other wasps, can sting repeatedly.

## YELLOWJACKET CONTROL

In the summer months, foraging yellowjackets may become a nuisance in parks, campgrounds and other areas. Yellowjackets can be managed through:

### Sanitation

- Tightly cover garbage receptacles and move from eating areas to reduce food available to foraging workers
- Eliminate standing water to help reduce the water available for cooling the nest and drinking

### Depletion Trapping

While this method can help to reduce foraging workers, it is *not an effective method for eliminating yellowjackets*. Commercially available traps use a chemical lure to attract foraging workers into a container with a one way passage. Once inside, the insect cannot escape and dies. Traps should be placed in areas away from food and people.



## PAPER WASP CONTROL

Paper wasps may become a nuisance when they build a nest on or near your home. Every attempt should be made to limit suitable nest sites:

- Repair holes in walls
- Caulk cracks in eaves
- Screen vents and louvers

## NEST CONTROL FOR YELLOWJACKETS & PAPER WASPS

Nests may require control when their location becomes a problem. While there are products available on the market, there is always a risk of personal injury involved when treating yellowjacket nests. Call a private pest control company or your local vector control agency for recommendations. (Please note: Depletion trapping, as used for yellowjackets, does not attract paper wasps and will not reduce their numbers.)



## FIRST AID FOR STINGS

### For any sting:

- Wash with soap and cold water

### For allergic reactions:

- Seek immediate medical care

### For multiple stings or hypersensitive persons:

- Seek immediate medical care
- Do not wait for symptoms to develop