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Wasps and Honey Bees

by Stanley Rachesky
Entomologist, University of Illinois

Every year during the months of May, June and early July wasps and honey bees can be commonly seen swarming on a shrub in the backyard or near a section of your home. In the case of honey bees, this happens because the original honey bee colony divides; half of the worker bees leave the old hive to begin a new one. The swarms can last from a few hours to a few days and usually cause only a temporary problem to area homeowners. It is best to leave them alone as they will normally fly away. The colony is looking for a place to nest such as a hollow tree trunk or an entrance to a building wall.

When the swarm of bees or wasps decides to make its home in the wall of a building problems then begin. If control is initiated immediately no additional headaches will be encountered. However, once the hive or nest becomes established within the wall, the wall itself must be opened and the contents removed. If this is not done, the smell of decay from the uninhabited nest will occur, secondary insect problems such as larder beetles, carpet beetles, etc., will become evident or you may create a mouse problem.

Flight entrance to the nest and location of the colony can be found by tapping on the wall at night and listening to the buzzing from within. The center of the nest has a temperature of 95°F., therefore, you also may be able to feel the heat through the wall. Usually the entrance hole to the nest is located far enough away from the main body of the nest that control only from this point is useless.

For control of either wasps or bees:

1. Use one of the following insecticides: Sevin (carbaryl) 5% dust or Malathion 4% dust. These insecticides are readily obtainable at your local garden center, hardware store or farm supply.

2. Dusts are the best formulation to use for they disperse better.

3. Apply the dust first through the entrance hole **after dark** — Bee careful!

4. Drill a 1/4" hole in the wall above the colony and inject the insecticide through it. Seal the hole and all other escape holes.

5. Large colonies may require repeat treatments

in about 10 days to eliminate emerging bees and wasps.

6. In approximately 2 weeks all buzzing activity should have stopped. Removal of the dead insects is next. When the nest is removed it should be discarded in such a manner so as not to attract other insects of the same species.

7. After removal of the nest treat the area with a spray of Diazinon 0.5% in oil to eliminate the chances of a secondary insect problem.

8. Control of a beehive or wasp nest located in a tree or shrub can be done by using a hose-end sprayer (the little bottle that fits on the end of your garden hose) or power sprayer and or one of the following chemicals: Sevin 50% wettable powder or Malathion 57% emulsifiable concentrate (mix with water) plus DDVP or Pyrethrin.

Malathion will give a residual of about 3-5 days and either the DDVP or Pyrethrin is used as a quick knockdown. Once again do your control work at night when nest activity is low. And once again **BEE CAREFUL!**

Bee and wasp nests located in the ground can be quickly eradicated by using Chlordane. Mix a gallon or two according to label directions on the bottle. Pour directly over the nest site. Once again do your control work at night. After treatment place a few shovel fulls of dirt over the treated area.

—READ THE LABEL BEFORE USING ANY PESTICIDE.

NEW SPRAY BATTLES ELM DISEASE

A research group may have found a solution to Dutch elm disease.

The Elm Research Institute, a nonprofit group, is sending brochures describing the program, which employs new chemical sprays, to civic organizations and commercial tree experts in the hope that the program will win widespread usage.

The concept, which includes a 2-per cent Methoxychlor spray — a compound recently approved as safe by federal agencies — must be used on a community-wide basis to be effective, an institute spokesman said.

JOHN P. HANSEL, executive director of the institute, urged persons and groups interested in elm tree protection to write for details from the institute's headquarters in Waldwick, N.J. 07463.

James Tyndall, assistant general superintendent of the Cook County Forest Preserve District, said he had received information on the program and called it "encouraging."

He cautioned however, that it was no "miracle cure" and can be used only where spraying is practicable.

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