

ELIMINATE BEES AND WASPS ONLY IF THERE IS DANGER

Q—Will bee and wasp problems be as big a problem this year as they have been the last three years?

A—That's a hard question to answer because insect populations are dictated by their environment. Indications so far show that populations are on the increase again and usually peak out about the end of August.

Hornets, yellowjackets, paper wasps, mud daubers, and cicada killers are the wasps that commonly occur in Illinois. The world has 110,000 different species of wasps. They are great pollinators, and it has been said that life would cease to exist without them. However, when they build their nests near homes or in recreational areas, they become pests and should be controlled.

Wasps often are identified by the nests they build. Hornets build large, football-shaped paper nests in tree limbs or under eaves. Yellowjackets usually build their nests below ground but sometimes choose attics or wall voids. Paper wasps build small, umbrella-shaped nests under eaves or in trees and shrubbery. Mud daubers construct parallel clay or mud tubes as nests in attics or under eaves. Cicada killers dig holes in the soil to establish their nests. Hornets, yellowjackets and paper wasps abandon their nests in the fall.

Mated queens are the only survivors. These queens live out the winter in protected areas, such as under tree bark or in attics. Mud daubers and cicada killers overwinter as larvae in their nests.

Hornets, yellowjackets and paper wasps are social insects. Queens (fertile females), workers (infertile males) and males make up the colony. Social wasps will defend their nests by stinging. Mud daubers and cicada killers are solitary wasps. They rarely sting.

Wasp and bee control usually is not difficult. First of all, I am not advocating the destruction of any wasp nest or bee hive you see, but only those that pose a direct threat to health and safety. For best results apply your controls in the evening after the sun has set or in the early morning hours when all the insects are in their nests. Treat the nests directly. Wet above-ground nests thoroughly with a spray.

Soil nests are best treated with a dust or granular formulation of insecticide. The most available insecticides of choice are sevin and diazinon. They may be purchased at your local garden center. After the nests have been treated, wait at least 24 hours before removing. Read and follow all label directions carefully when using an insecticide.

**Stanley Rachesky, Entomologist
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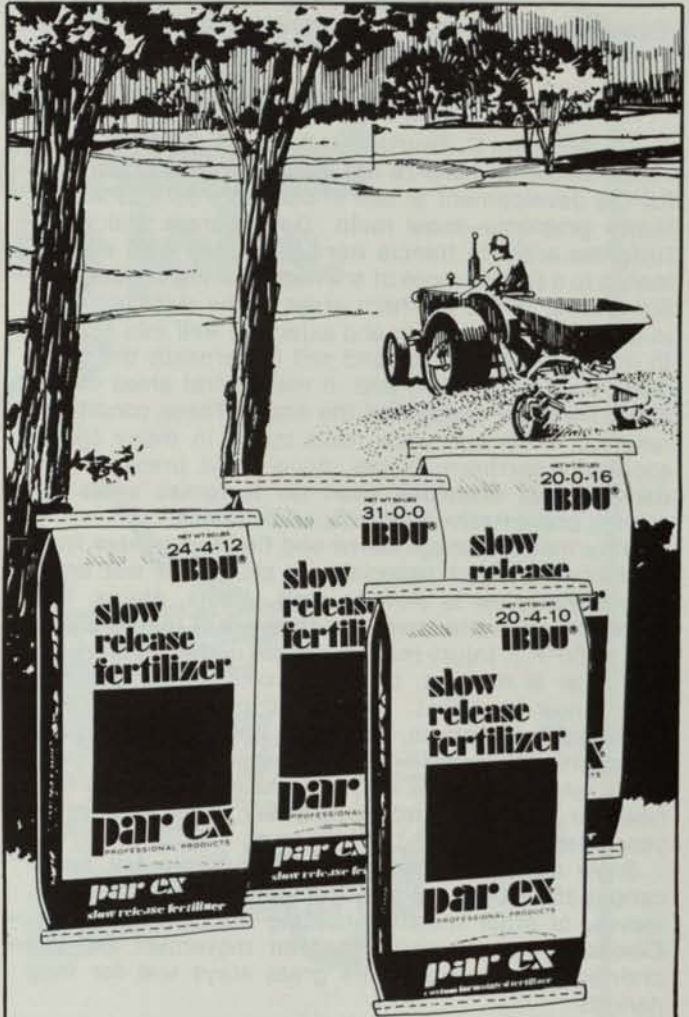
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