

SURVIVING WITH YELLOW JACKETS

With the large number of yellowjackets present, there are some practices that we can do to reduce their interest in us while we are engaged in outdoor activities, says Dr. Philip L. Nixon, University of Illinois Area Extension Adviser in Entomology.

Yellowjackets are elongate, about 1/2 inch long, and are black with yellow markings showing as stripes on the abdomen. These wasps construct large nests of paper underground, in wall voids, and in other protected places.

Due to the large number of larvae or immatures in these nests at this time of year, adult yellowjackets are very active looking for insects and other meat in garbage cans, at picnics, and in other areas for larval food.

There is very little that one can do to repel these insects, but we can avoid attracting them. Bees and wasps are attracted to yellow, thus not wearing clothes that are yellow or contain yellow in the color such as orange or light green will reduce yellowjacket problems. Also avoid using perfume, scented deodorants, and hairspray as these substances have a floral scent that is attractive.

Individuals with long hair should wear a hat or hair net when outside, since many stings come from yellowjackets that get tangled in hair.

Plan outdoor activities in the evening when yellowjackets are less numerous. Since bees and wasps use the position of ultraviolet rays from the sun to locate their nest and other landmarks, most of these insects stay in their nests near sundown and on cloudy or rainy days.

Since yellowjackets are cold-blooded animals, they will be less active on cold days, particularly when the temperature is below 40 degrees F.

When all else fails, and yellowjackets become a major nuisance at a picnic or other outdoor event, they can sometimes be baited off. Fish-flavored canned cat food placed at least 50 feet away from your activity will attract these wasps away from you. It may backfire, however, by attracting so many yellowjackets that their numbers spill over into your outdoor activity area.

Philip L. Nixon, Ph.D.
Area Extension Adviser - Entomology

Being An Editor ...

Getting out this magazine is no picnic
If we print jokes, people say we are silly.
If we don't they say we are too serious.
If we stick to the office all day,
We ought to be around hustling material.
If we go out and try to hustle,
We ought to be on the job in the office.
If we don't print contributions,
We don't appreciate genius;
And if we do print them, the paper is filled with junk!
If we edit the other fellow's write-ups we're too critical;
If we don't we're asleep.
If we slip things from other papers
We are too lazy to write ourselves.
If we don't we are stuck on our stuff.
Now, like as not, some guy will say
We swiped this from some magazine.*

*We did!

"May the Lord keep you in his hand
and never close his fist on you
And may the face of every good news
and the back of every bad news be toward us
in the New Year."

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