

European wasp season kicks off!



It is a high stakes match WA plays each year to 'detect, locate and destroy' any European wasps that breach our borders.

Unlike other wasps and bees present in WA, European wasps pose a unique threat to WA's environment, businesses and our ability to enjoy many social activities. So here are the unique behaviours of our rivals you need to know:

- They're **aggressive and dangerous**, with underground nests containing 1000s of wasps, positioned just below the surface like a ticking time bomb.
- They're **scavengers** of human food and drinks, pet food and dead animals.
- They're **predators** of native insects and immobile defenceless animals like baby birds.
- They're **adaptable** and WA's climate means nests won't die over winter and they could become a bigger pest here than anywhere else.

Our opposition can shut down a picnic in a matter of minutes, they'll sting children and pets in the mouth just for enjoying their food or drinks, and boy, they will have you sprinting

when you unknowingly run over their nest with your lawn mower.

They disrupt local ecosystems, reduce biodiversity and in New Zealand are pushing species to the brink of extinction.

Every season seems a little harder given our opponents are gaining ground in SA, NSW, ACT, VIC and TAS. Fertilised queens sneak in to WA on vehicles and in freight and cargo. The queens disperse and lay low, gradually building their nest numbers. Luckily, summer presents an opportunity to detect these interstate invaders, as hungry workers leave the nest to forage. Their drive for protein lures them into our homes, cafés, recreational areas and fortuitously, our surveillance traps. If nests are established nearby, wasps tend to make themselves known.





The 'Plan of attack'

(Good thing wasps can't read!)

Offence: Surveillance teams and trapping grids are our early warning systems. The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) are the lead agency deploying traps in the highest risk areas, whilst other agencies, community groups and the broader public deploy traps spanning the state. When wasps are detected, DPIRD officers locate and destroy the nests.

Defence: Everyone! Knowing the unique behaviour of these wasps and how to report them is key to their early detection. Our frontline services screen hundreds of calls, emails and MyPestGuide reports to detect and differentiate European wasps from similar looking wasp and bee species.

The European wasp surveillance and eradication program has been successful for 41 years in preventing European wasp establishment within WA.

Here's last season's stats:

- 130 nests detected and destroyed (highest on record), 1 in Hyden, 1 in Australind, 128 in the Perth Metro.
- Over 2000 surveillance traps deployed
- 300+ traps adopted by the public
- 76% of nests found in residential areas
- 90% of nests found underground
- Over 600 public enquiries and 30 confirmed reports

It's sweaty, hard and busy work. It's a game where true success means finding and destroying every nest, every year. The investment by residents, businesses, orchardists, local and State governments and so on, truly pays off and each win belongs to everyone.

If you see wasps landing on food, notice what looks like a paper wasp but with black antennae (feelers) or see wasps flying in and out of a hole in the ground, REPORT IT.

Find out more

For more information about the eradication program, how to identify European wasps or how to you could get trapping, see agric.wa.gov.au/wasps or contact our Pest and Disease Information Service.



Report suspect wasps



MyPestGuide™ Reporter
via app or online
mypestguide.agric.wa.gov.au



Pest and Disease Information Service
(08) 9368 3080
padis@dpird.wa.gov.au

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