

# Backyard Buddies

Your monthly guide to animal and plant pests, diseases and weeds



Here at the Pest and Disease Information Service, we're passionate about the early detection and eradication of European wasps in Western Australia. So, when a staff member purchased this gorgeous Golden Retriever puppy named Frank (photographed above), it was the perfect excuse to bring him to work to 'help out'.

People unfamiliar with European wasps (*Vespula germanica*) are warned, they are one of the most invasive insect pests globally, with major incursions in eastern Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Chile, Argentina, the United States and Canada.

This social wasp species thrives in suburbia as well as wilderness areas, and can have a profound impact on humans. They can affect our health, outdoor lifestyles, environment and horticultural industries.

### Wasp-free WA

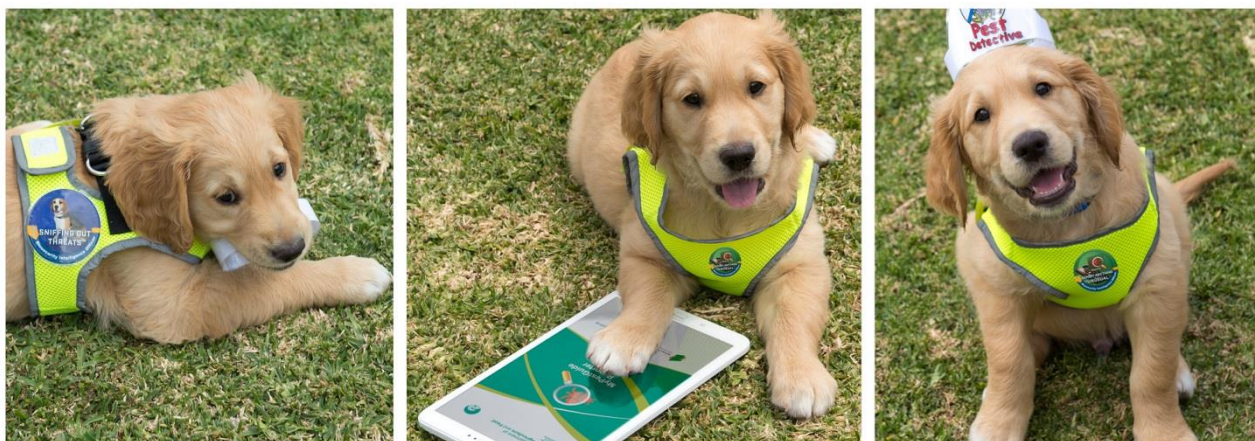
Our annual European wasp campaign runs from December through to May and involves the deployment of surveillance traps across metropolitan and regional WA by the department, local governments and community members.

Our service also screens hundreds of calls from community members who are 'on watch' for the pest.



European wasp taking tuna from a can

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Puppy, Frank, equipped with hat, tablet and jacket, learns how to be a good pest detective.

Residents who report wasps that visit pet food or dog bones help detect this pest.

Natural-born scavengers, European wasps have an appetite for protein and sugars, driving them into our backyards and picnic areas. Of the 52 nests found last year, 22 were discovered on residential properties.

The rapid detection and destruction of nests prevents this pest getting a foothold in WA. We want to know as soon as you suspect a European wasp.



Compare European wasp and paper wasp

## What to look for

Near identical to the common and widespread yellow paper wasp (*Polistes dominulus*), these features can help identify European wasps:

- attracted to human and pet food
- black antennae (feelers)
- nests are predominately hidden underground

## How to help

Keep an eye out for European wasps, help spread the word, and sign-up to 'Adopt a Trap' for your property.

People in environment or community groups can play a critical role in the surveillance of rural or bushland areas.

## More information

More detail about the European wasp and the surveillance and eradication program is provided on our website at: [agric.wa.gov.au/wasps](http://agric.wa.gov.au/wasps)

## Report unfamiliar pests

Use the **MyPestGuide™ Reporter** app: [mypestguide.agric.wa.gov.au](http://mypestguide.agric.wa.gov.au) or call the Pest and Disease Information Service



