

Hornet



The bald-faced hornet lives throughout North America. They are best known for their large football-shaped paper nest, which they build in the spring for raising their young. These nests can sometimes reach 3 feet tall. Bald-faced hornets are extremely protective of their nests and will sting repeatedly if disturbed. The main area of the body that bald faced hornets attack on humans is the facial area.

Every year young queens that were born and fertilized the previous year start a new colony and raise their young. The workers expand the nest by chewing up wood that mixes with a starch in their saliva, which they spread with their mandibles and legs to dry into paper. The workers also guard the nest and collect nectar and arthropods to feed the larvae. This continues through summer and into fall. As winter approaches, the wasps die, except for young fertilized queens which hibernate underground or in hollow trees. The nest is generally abandoned by winter, and will most likely not be reused. When spring arrives the young queens emerge, and the cycle begins again. As in all stinging wasps, hornets can sting multiple times—they do not die after stinging a human, as is typical for a worker honey bee, as the sting is not barbed (the honey bee stinger has evolved for defending the nest against vertebrates/mammals). They can also bite and sting at the same time.



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