

Yellowjacket



Yellowjacket or **yellow-jacket** is the common name in North America for predatory wasps of the genera *Vespula* and *Dolichovespula*. They can be identified by their distinctive markings, small size (similar to or slightly smaller or larger than a honey bee), their occurrence only in colonies, and a characteristic, rapid, side to side flight pattern prior to landing. They are often mistakenly called "bees."

All females are capable of stinging. A typical yellowjacket worker is about 12 mm (0.5 inches) long, with alternating bands on the abdomen while the queen is larger, about 19 mm (0.75 inches) long (the different patterns on the abdomen help separate various species). Workers are sometimes confused with honey bees, especially when flying in and out of their nests. Yellowjackets, in contrast to honey bees, are not covered with tan-brown dense hair on their bodies and lack the flattened hairy hind legs used to carry pollen. Yellowjackets have a lance-like stinger with small barbs and typically sting repeatedly, though occasionally the sting becomes lodged and pulls free of the wasp's body; the venom, like most bee/wasp venoms, is primarily dangerous to those who are allergic.



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