

## Wasps and Bees – telling the difference






Many people report sightings of wasps in early spring (April & May) which are actually honey bees or solitary bees (mortar and mining bees). Bees are often confused with wasps because they have a similar shape. However, wasps have distinct yellow/black bands around the abdomen whereas bees have a more non-descript light brown/yellow colour.

Honey bees are social insects and live in a nest which may contain several thousand workers. Unlike wasps and bumble bees, the honey bee's nest survives for many years.

If you are unsure as to whether you have a wasp's nest or bee's nest you should look carefully at the brickwork to see if they are going in or out of a single hole/air brick or investigating several holes over an area wider than one foot. Wasps will use a single hole but mortar bees will investigate several. A further test is whether or not the activity continues on cold overcast days or just warm sunny days. Mortar bees will only be active on sunny days.

Although honey bees are capable of stinging, they are generally not aggressive and will not sting unless provoked. Bees should, preferably, be left alone. They may however be dealt with on an eradication service in extenuating circumstance, for example if they are in a location that could be dangerous to the public and they are unlikely to move on in the immediate future.

A beekeeper may be requested to remove a swarm if it is located outdoors and is accessible.

<b>CHARACTERISTICS:</b>	<b>Coat/ Colour</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>Nest</b>	<b>Food</b>	<b>Habits</b>
 <p><b>HONEYBEE</b></p>	<p>Furry (short hair)</p> <p>Black or brown intermixed with amber</p>	<p>Queen: 1.6cm-1.8cm</p> <p>Worker: 1.2cm-1.4cm</p>	<p>Hollow Trees</p> <p>Roofs</p> <p>Wall cavities</p>	<p>Nectar from flowers</p>	<p>Gentle natured</p> <p>Dies after stinging</p> <p>Swarms in Spring and Summer</p>
 <p><b>BUMBLEBEE</b></p>	<p>Furry (long hair)</p> <p>Black and yellow</p>	<p>Queen: 2cm-3cm</p> <p>Worker: 0.8cm-2cm</p>	<p>Cavities in soil</p>	<p>Nectar from flowers</p>	<p>Gentle natured</p> <p>Reluctant to sting</p> <p>Does not swarm</p> <p>Seen from Spring until late Autumn</p>
 <p><b>SOLITARY BEE</b></p>	<p>Furry (short hair)</p> <p>Vary in colour</p>	<p>Various sizes. Generally smaller than honeybees</p>	<p>Mortar between bricks</p> <p>Sandy soil</p> <p>Soft cement</p>	<p>Nectar from flowers</p>	<p>Gentle natured</p> <p>Rarely stings</p> <p>Does not swarm</p> <p>Can appear as early as March</p>
 <p><b>WASP</b></p>	<p>Little or no hair</p> <p>Bright yellow and black</p>	<p>Queen: About 2cm</p> <p>Worker: 1.2cm-1.8cm</p>	<p>Lofts/attics</p> <p>Wall cavities</p> <p>Hollow trees/bushes</p>	<p>Insects</p> <p>Sugary drinks</p> <p>Food waste</p>	<p>Aggressive natured</p> <p>Stings readily and repeatedly</p> <p>Does not swarm</p> <p>Common in late Summer</p>
 <p><b>HORNET</b></p>	<p>Some hair</p> <p>Chestnut brown and yellow</p>	<p>Queen: About 3.5cm</p> <p>Worker: 2cm-3cm</p>	<p>Tree trunks</p> <p>Hollow walls</p> <p>Attics</p>	<p>Mainly insects</p>	<p>Only stings when provoked</p> <p>Can bite and sting at the same time</p> <p>Does not swarm</p> <p>Seen between May and September</p>