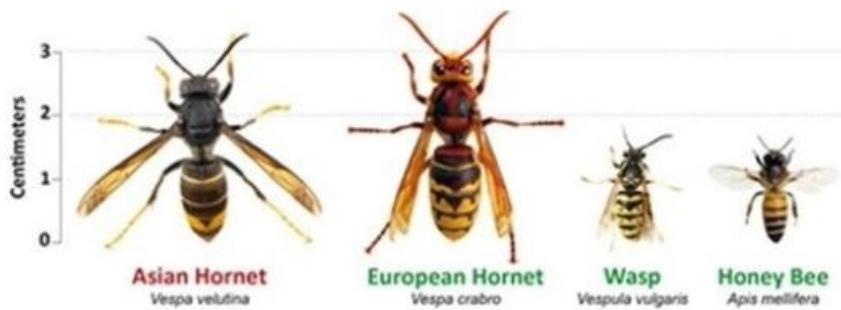


Think you've seen a yellow-legged (Asian) hornet?



Report through the Asian Hornet Watch app or www.bit.ly/asianhornetreport



Animal & Plant Health Agency

Yellow-legged Asian Hornet – do you know what it looks like and do you know what to do if you spot one? And why it matters to us all.

You may have read about the non-native invasive species Yellow legged Asian hornet last summer when a nest was spotted in Frinton. The nest, like all others discovered in our country, was destroyed and analysed as part of an ongoing campaign to stop this insect becoming established

in our country. **This insect poses a significant threat to our honeybees and many other pollinators. It is a highly aggressive predator of native insects and if allowed to become established in Britain, will cause a major concern to our soft fruit growers, vineyards, outdoor markets, and outdoor catering events such as festivals, not to mention beekeepers and bee farmers.** Its sting is also more powerful than the European hornet, wasps, or bees. The Yellow-legged Asian hornet varies their diet throughout the year and will hunt our native insects as well as fruit and meat/protein. Where they are already established in Europe, they are a public nuisance and have impacted honey production and other food sectors.

The Yellow-legged Asian hornet is not easily confused with any other species. They have a dark brown or black velvety body. Characteristically dark abdomen and yellow tipped legs (hence the name). They are very slightly smaller than the native European Hornet. Introduced to France in 2004 where it has spread rapidly. Hundreds of sightings have been recorded in the UK since it was first spotted in 2016, but only really regarded as a threat in the last couple of years. High possibility of introduction through, for example, soil associated with imported plants, cut flowers, fruit, garden items (furniture, plant pots), freight containers, in vehicles, or in/on untreated timber. The possibility that it could fly across the Channel has not been ruled out. We all need to keep a look out. Overwintered queens will start to come out of hibernation from February, weather dependent, and will look for somewhere to build a primary nest and start laying eggs -this may be a in a shed or similar. They will then usually move to a higher location, such as trees, and build a larger secondary nest. In the autumn more queens will be produced who will leave the nest to mate and look for a suitable place to hibernate over the winter. It is only the queens that survive into the winter – the other hornets die and the nest is abandoned.

Further information can be found on the National Bee Unit's website <https://www.nationalbeeunit.com/diseases-and-pests/asian-hornet>. **It is vital that we all play our part in spotting, photographing and reporting any sightings.**

- with the iPhone and Android recording app: **Asian Hornet Watch**
- online at: www.nonnativespecies.org/alerts/asianhornet
- by email: alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk

Colchester Beekeepers' Association are happy to give talks to clubs, groups, schools, or other organisations. Please contact ylah.colchester@gmail.com.