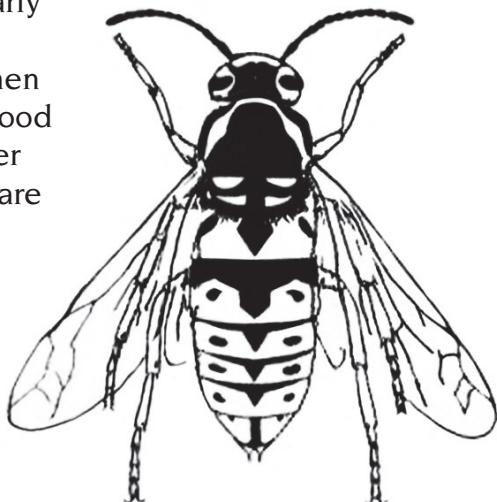




Yellowjackets

Black-and-yellow wasps called “yellowjackets” or “meat bees” are important members of the natural community in many of our state parks. During the cooler, wetter part of the year, yellowjackets are rarely seen, but in summer and fall their numbers increase greatly. They can become bothersome to park visitors.

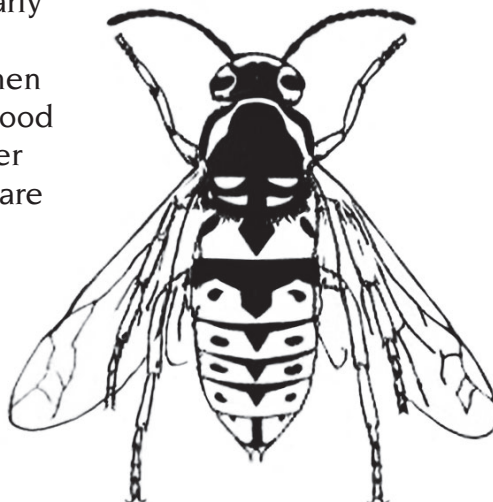
Yellowjackets are social insects, establishing colonies in burrows, debris piles, or logs that the wasps will fiercely defend. Humans who accidentally approach one of these nesting sites will quickly find themselves under attack. Because the wasps forage aggressively for meat, ripe fruit, and sweet liquids, yellowjackets may pose an even greater problem for picnickers and campers—particularly in dry years when natural food and water sources are scarce.



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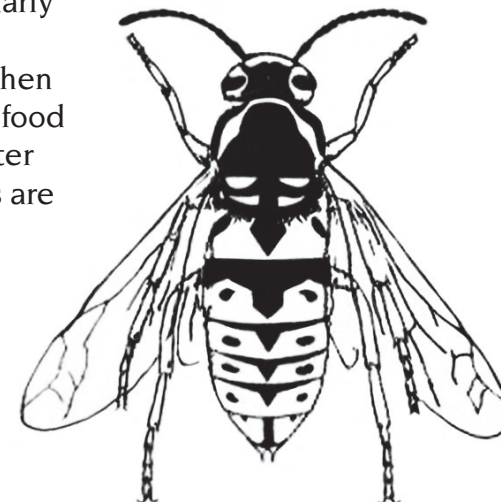
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The following tips should help you prevent an unpleasant encounter with these seasonal pests:

- Avoid wearing brightly colored clothing and going barefoot outdoors.
- Avoid using perfume, cologne, or scented soap.
- Place all food scraps and garbage in tightly closed containers.
- Eliminate standing water—do not allow faucets to drip.
- Check food and soda cans before putting them to your mouth.
- Do not swat at yellowjackets. Remain calm if one lands on your skin, and wait for it to leave or gently brush it off with a piece of paper.

If you are stung by a wasp, disinfect the skin and apply ice to reduce any swelling. Any pain and inflammation should subside within a few hours.

If you are among the very small minority of people who suffer severe allergic reactions to bee or wasp stings, seek medical attention immediately.



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