

### Paper Wasps

Paper wasps are reddish brown wasps, and may sometimes have yellow markings. They are about  $\frac{3}{4}$ - 1 inch in length with smoky wings.



Paper wasps make a paper nest out of chewed wood fiber. The nest is open and hangs from single filament. The nest is typically constructed in protected areas such as under the eaves of homes, in shrubbery, mailboxes or on fences.



Mated queens overwinter and emerge in spring to start a small, new nest in which to lay eggs. The colony, if left alone, grows in size throughout spring and summer. During this time workers forage mainly for protein, usually other insects, so they are great at helping to manage pests. Colonies reach their peak size in late summer to early fall. Starting in late summer, paper wasps forage on sugars and may be drawn to human inhabited areas that may contain a food source, such as garbage cans, outdoor patio areas or hummingbird feeders.

Paper wasps tend to be unaggressive, so if the nest is in an area where a stinging incidence is unlikely, it is best to leave it alone. If the nest is built in an area where someone may get stung- in a mailbox, on playground equipment, etc.- then it is recommended to manage wasps and then remove the nest.

Early in the season, when nests are just being started by founding females, it may be possible to discourage paper wasps to nest in a certain area by knocking down the nest repeatedly. This is not recommended when the nest is larger and contains multiple wasps.

Aerosol formulations- both synthetic and naturally derived- are available for paper wasp management. The nest should be treated either in the early morning or late evening to ensure that wasps are not out foraging for food. Use caution when treating paper wasps nests. Not only are you using a pesticide, but you are dealing with insects that can sting repeatedly. After all wasps are gone, knock down the nest and throw it away. You may want to clean the area where the nest was hanging to rid the area of any pheromones that could quickly attract new wasps to the area.

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600. Check out my blog at [www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com](http://www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com)

*The information given herein is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Extension or the Texas A&M AgriLife Research is implied. The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service provides equal access in its programs, activities, education and employment, without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity.*