



Brentwood
Borough Council

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INSECTS SPRINGING INTO ACTION

Now we are entering spring it is possible you will find very large Bees, Wasps or Hornets appearing in the garden and home. These are known as Queens. The queens will have over-wintered in a dry sheltered warm place.

Bumble Bees: Usually in April/May they start to emerge, generally behaving in a clumsy way. The bee is simply looking for a place to absorb heat. Often the bee will sunbathe on house walls. In some cases several Queen Bumble Bees can be found in one place. This process only occurs for 2/3 weeks. Once warmed up, the bee then looks for an appropriate location to start a nest. Commonly nests develop in dry old vegetation or in a small disused cavity underground. Bees are clumsy in flight, so don't be surprised if one accidentally bumps into you. This can often be interpreted by a human as an attempt to sting. Only in very rare cases should it be necessary to destroy the nest. The Council DO NOT provide a service for this as the Bumble Bee contributes to the pollination of plants etc.



Bumble Bee

Honey Bees: Will only become a problem when they swarm, usually in mid May and June when the weather is warm and humid. As the size of the colony increases and a new queen emerges, she will then take half of the workers in search of a new location. The swarming process can cause the swarm to alight temporarily on houses or in trees, before moving on. A swarm will consist of several hundred to several thousand bees. There is no cause for alarm. The bees will only become aggressive if disturbed. Destruction of a swarm IS NOT

usually necessary. A swarm can often be removed and relocated by a bee keeper. Contact the Environmental Health Department for help and advice.



Honey Bee Swarm



Honey Bee

Hornets: Hornets are Dark Orange and Black. They are generally three times the size of a common wasp. Normally not aggressive if left alone. But when agitated they are very defensive of their nest. The Hornet sting is more painful than a wasp sting. Hornets are becoming increasingly rare due to the removal of dead trees, which they normally use as their habitat. For this reason, in rare circumstances would we consider treating the nest.



Hornet 4cm Long

Common Wasps: Several species of wasp exist in the UK, but the most abundant are the Common Wasp. The wasps generally nest in the cavity walls or loft. Although the queens are already emerging from hibernation, it will take the queen several days of scouting to find an appropriate site to nest. If you find a queen wasp within the home, simply open the nearest window and allow the wasp to fly away.

In the majority of cases, if the wasps are left undisturbed, they are not aggressive and will only sting when aroused or frightened. Despite the human perception, wasps and hornets do serve an important part in natural pest control. They feed on aphids, greenfly, black fly and ants.

During May we advise that you look in your loft for a small nest. The nest will be of a papier maché construction, size and colour may vary. Don't be surprised to find an old dead nest the size of a beach ball. Old nests are never used again. If you wish to do so, an old nest can be removed and disposed of in the rubbish.



Common Wasp



Young Wasp Nests



Large Dead Wasp Nest

If a live nest is no larger than a tennis ball, a household fly spray will be sufficient to kill the nest. Otherwise you can contact a reputable pest control company to arrange a treatment.

To sum up our little friends in flight: bees pollinate plants, wasps and hornets clean our plants (nature at its best.) So ask yourself, is it really necessary to kill a nest?

For more details, contact the Environmental Health Department at the Town Hall on **01277 312504**.