

# Bee or Wasp ?

## How to Tell the Difference



**Honey Bee**

- 1. Looking for nectar from Flowers**
- 2. Makes Honey**
- 3. Improves the Environment**
- 4. Reluctant to Sting**
- 5. Major pollinator of fruits and vegetables.**



**WASP**

- 1. Protein eaters - likes your picnic table; can sting repeatedly.**
- 2. Can be captured by a specialist and used by science.**

The next two pages will provide you more information on how to get help with honey bee swarms on your property or wasp problems.

**With either species, please don't kill or spray them - they have an important purpose in our environment.**

## Help with swarms of honeybees.

[*Honey Bee collecting flower pollen*]



1. First, determine if what you are seeing are really honeybees. Below are a few pictures of honey bee swarms. Farther below are pictures of Wasps which the Olympia Beekeepers Association is not in a position to handle but you can contact [Mike Juhl at 360-866-1834 who captures live Wasps for medical research.](#)



Above are typical of honeybees who have done their natural thing of leaving a hive with a Queen in search of a new home with more room. These types of swarms are relatively easy for a beekeeper to collect and safely move to a new home in a hive thereby saving the bees dying or being killed with pesticides. When bees are in these swarm clusters they are focused on remaining around the Queen while a few search for a suitable new home. They are **NOT** dangerous and generally will not harm anyone.

- b. Second, call the Olympia Beekeepers Association SWARM coordinator at  
**360-491-4968**

and we will coordinate finding a member who can respond to help you. It is important to have the following information. ***Location: Address, height from ground, access to the swarm, telephone contact number, any other pertinent information you can provide.*** Sometimes, honeybees will swarm into an eave, attic, or wall opening and these locations require special tools to save the bees. So if you see a swarm like the pictures above, it is important to act quickly while they are in a location easy relocate into a hive box.

**Wasps and Yellow Jackets:** The wasp family of insects includes thousands of species all around the world, most of which are predatory. The most common types of wasps are hornets, yellow jackets, and paper wasps. Knowing how to identify wasps can be difficult as it's not easy to study the physical appearance of a wasp from a distance. Moreover, for the average person, bees and wasps tend to look alike and can be easily confused for one another. Nevertheless, there are a good number of tips and tricks that you can use to see if an insect is a wasp or not, and react accordingly.

1. Look for the characteristic *black and yellow* or a *brownish red* color pattern. Obviously, some species of bees have a similar color pattern too, so this isn't decisive. And while color can be a great immediate indicator, careful closer inspection will be necessary to make a more accurate judgment. Wasps can be identified by its yellow and black stripes.
2. Look for a predominantly black appearance with small white markings. If the insect you're observing looks like this, it may be a hornet, which is a type of wasp
3. Look for brown, red, black or yellow colors. A wasp with these colors is most likely a paper wasp.



Paper Wasp Nest

