

Asian Hornet

(*Vespa mandarinia*)

Pest Alert: Asian Giant Hornet

Three Asian Hornets (*Vespa mandarinia*) were found in the Nanaimo area on Vancouver Island in mid-August. The identification has been confirmed by Canadian and international experts. This is the first time this insect has been found in British Columbia.

Please report it if you see it:

British Columbians who think they may have seen one are asked to take a photo if possible and report the sighting to

The Invasive Species Council of B.C.:

- 1-888-933-3722
- <https://bcinvasives.ca/report>
- info@bcinvasives.ca

This is what the Asian Hornet looks like:

Asian Giant Hornets are large, and have noticeably large orange heads and black eyes. Worker hornets are approximately 3.5 cm in length and queens can be up to 4-5 cm in length with a wingspan of 4-7cm.



Look-alike species:

There are several large insects that are native to British Columbia that are commonly seen and could be mistaken for Asian Hornets. There is no need to report these ones:

Bald faced hornet



Yellow jacket



Horntail wasp



Elm Sawfly



Other information about Asian Hornets:

- These Asian Giant Hornets only nest in the ground, unlike other species of wasps or bees that build nests and hives in trees and/or buildings.
- Asian Hornets are not interested in humans, pets and large animals. They hunt insects for food. The only time hornets will attack is when their nest is disturbed.
- Asian Hornets will feed on honeybees and are capable of destroying hives in a short time period.
- Hornets are dormant and unlikely to be seen in fall and winter.

If you are stung:

- As with wasp or bee stings, place an ice cube/pack or cold compress on the location to reduce inflammation and the spread of venom.
- Don't rub the site, it will cause the venom to spread into the surrounding tissue.
- If you are stung multiple times or have symptoms of toxic or allergic reaction, seek medical attention immediately.

Biology:

- *V. mandarinia* is a large hornet that predated on honeybees and other large insects. It establishes ground nests and forages as far as eight kilometres from its nest. Similarly to endemic wasps including Bald-Faced Hornets and Yellowjackets, the Giant Hornet establishes annual nests in the spring. During the summer it expands until August when virgin queens will emerge. After mating, the young queens will disperse and winter on their own. The original nest dies in the fall.
- This hornet is widely distributed in East Asia from the sub-tropics of South China to the temperate zones of the Korean peninsula and northern Japan.

Links:

- Visit HealthLink for more information on common insect stings:
<https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-topics/sig44526> and allergies to insect stings:
<https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-topics/rt1285>
- Invasive Species Council of BC - <https://bcinvasives.ca/>