

# CLOSE TO HOME

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### Did You Know?

- Hornets Don't sting?
- What may be living under you front stoop?
- Not all inspectors are equal?
- You can make your yellow jacket problem worse?

Read the stories to find out more!



## WASPS AND YELLOW JACKETS ARE HERE!

August and September are the two biggest months for bee and wasp problems. What began as tiny nests in May have now grown, in some cases, to colonies several hundred strong. Stinging insects are a danger to everybody, and especially those with allergic reactions. Let's go over the three kinds of stinging insects commonly encountered.

Paper Wasps have long narrow bodies with three distinct segments. They have yellow and brown stripes and are often mistaken for Yellow Jackets. Paper Wasps have the open comb, flat nests found in eaves, louvers, and overhangs. Large nests can have up to fifty wasps in it. Wasps are quite aggressive if agitated, and prefer sunny locations.

Yellow Jackets are also brown and yellow striped but live in large paper nests on tree limbs, in wall voids, and in ground cavities. They are a menace to gardeners and insulation installers who un-



Take the sting out of Summer! Have your home inspected for bees and wasps.

knowingly stir up their nests. Several hundred yellow jackets make up a colony.

Hornets are in a class by themselves as they are the most aggressive, and are actually a **biting** insect. They are black and white in color and have large football-like paper nests on house over-

hangs and tree limbs. Hornet nests blend in well with vegetation and are easy to bump into in shrubs and low branches. Watch your step when hornets get angry. More than one exterminator has taken refuge in a swimming pool!



## SUBTERRANEAN SECRETS: TERMITE TIPS

**How do termites get into homes?** This column explores their most common entry points and explains why.

Remember that termites live underground and attack the first wood/paper product they can find. The most com-

mon place to find them is behind the front stoop. When these are built, they are filled with dirt and capped with concrete or bricks. The dirt often is filled up to or above the sill plate of the house. This provides wood-ground contact, an easy entry for the

termite.

Adding to the problem, builders used to use stoops as a dumping ground for wood scraps and other construction debris. Termites find this food source first, and quickly move to the house.

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## YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED HERE!

**Q.** Today's homebuyer can choose to have several inspections prior to closing. Which ones are most important, and how should they choose an inspector?

**A.** Some of the many inspections/tests to include with the home inspection include pest, radon, chimney, roof, and mold. In addition, the home inspector may recommend additional evaluations from an expert for issues beyond his expertise. **Which inspections are most important?** It depends on two factors; the house and the client. A house with a wood burning fireplace that will be used by the new owner should have the chimney inspected by a professional. Clients with asthmatics in the family should have mold testing if signs/symptoms are present. Pest

inspections can help detect roaches and mice, whose droppings can irritate asthmatics. Geography plays a part in where termites are frequently found. Finished basements are crucial for radon testing.

**How should an inspector be chosen?** Again, two factors come to mind. Experience and objectivity. Choose an expert in the field that has "been around the block". I recently inspected a home for termites at the recommendation of another "pest inspector". He thought he saw evidence of termites under the basement stairs. It turned out to be citronella ants. Which inspector would you want? And try to find an expert that does not do the remediation. A conflict of interest is always there for the serviceman/inspector, even the most honest.



### ASK JOHN!

**Q.** I see yellow jackets flying in and out from a hole in the siding of my house. How can I get rid of them?

**A.** This is first answered by saying what not to do. Don't use a liquid or aerosol spray; it won't reach the nest. Don't plug the hole. Yellow jackets usually come inside when their exit is blocked.

I'm afraid the rest of the answer involves an exterminator. Only a state licensed individual can use the proper dust insecticide that will resolve a nest in a wall. When properly applied, the yellow jackets will track the dust into the nest, destroying it.

If nothing is done, the nest will eventually die in the colder weather. But beware, yellow jackets sometimes break through ceilings and fill a room. It's best to have them professionally treated for the safety of your family.

