

IMPORTANT ASIAN HORNET ADVICE FOR OUTDOOR WORKERS

Who is this advice for? - anyone working outside, commercially or privately, and applies to gardeners, tree surgeons, farmers, branchage contractors, roadside maintenance personnel, parks & gardens staff, foot path and countryside maintenance personnel.

What are Asian hornets? – an invasive, stinging insect that is a predator of native insects and a threat to honey bees, other pollinators and our diverse Jersey ecology. They are generally black/dark brown with only one orange/yellow band across their bottom, a fine yellow “belt” at their waist and yellow tipped legs.

Where do they nest? – Usually high in trees, but also in brambles, hedges, building roof spaces, cliffs and in the ground. Early in the season, nests may be the size of a tennis ball, later on from late July the size of a football and larger. Nests are usually extremely well camouflaged amongst foliage and very difficult to see.

What is the risk? - The DANGER is if a nest is disturbed. Hornets have been known to defend their nest area vigorously.

What do I do to reduce the risk? - Examine the area in which you are to be working, **before you start work**. Look for any unusual insect activity or anything that could be a hornet’s nest?

What do I do if I see something suspicious? - **STOP!** Assess the situation. Stay 10 metres away and don’t touch, disturb or cause vibrations around a nest. Report any possible hornet or nest sightings by calling 01534 441633 or emailing asianhornet@gov.je. A photograph can help with identification.

What then? - A Dept. Environment officer, Asian hornet volunteer, or pest controller will come to confirm the sighting or nest, and take appropriate action to make the situation safe.

How serious is the sting? - Individual hornets aren’t usually aggressive, but their sting can be more severe than a wasp’s and they may sting more than once. The sting may present more of a risk of a severe allergic reaction or anaphylactic shock than wasp stings. If you suffer from a sting allergy, take your usual precautions. If you are stung and feel unwell, seek medical attention immediately.