

Asian paper wasp

Polistes chinensis

What does it look like?

Paper wasps are distinguished by their body shape, which is slender and 13-25mm long. They have reddish-brown to black bodies with yellow rings and reddish areas on the abdomen. The wings are reddish or amber brown and they have long legs that hang down during flight. The Asian paper wasp is larger than the Australian paper wasp. It arrived in New Zealand in the late 1970s and by 1995 was widespread throughout the upper North Island. The Australian paper wasp has been in New Zealand for more than a century.

The paper wasps frequently construct their nests above ground on houses or other buildings and will also nest in trees or bushes. Large populations of Asian paper wasps occur in lowland open habitats such as shrublands, swamps and salt marshes.

Why is it a problem?

Asian paper wasps can occur at high densities of more than 200 nests per hectare and 6300 wasps per hectare. The potential impact of such high densities of these wasps on native ecosystems is a concern, although the full extent of this impact requires further research. Asian paper wasps prey mainly on invertebrates, especially caterpillars, and are capable of consuming 957g per hectare per season of invertebrate biomass. They also compete with other insects for nectar and honeydew resources.



Control Methods

Spray paper wasp nests with household fly spray in the evening, when wasps will be in the nest. After spraying, place a bag under the nest, pull it up around the nest and cut the nest off into the bag. Seal the bag and dispose of in the rubbish or burn it.

There are many products that can be purchased from garden centres and supermarkets that will help with the elimination of wasps. If you suspect or determine that you have multiple wasp nests, contact a specialist pest management firm. It is important to be aware that accidental contact or proximity with the nest will signal a threat to these wasps and they are capable of stinging numerous times.

Related Links

Ministry for Primary Industries <http://apps.mpi.govt.nz/applications/nzpests-view/Article/1826/Asian-Paper-Wasp>

Landcare Research <http://www.landcareresearch.co.nz/science/plants-animals-fungi/animals/invertebrates/invasive-invertebrates/wasps/other-wasps/paper-wasps>

GWRC Regional Pest Management Plan <https://www.gw.govt.nz/environment/pest-management/>

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Rules

Under Section 52 and 53 of the Biosecurity Act 1993 no person can sell, propagate, breed, distribute or otherwise spread any pest in a Pest Management Plan, or any unwanted organism. Not complying with Section 52 or 53 is an offence under the Act, and may result in penalties noted in Section 157(1).

An occupier within the Wellington Region shall, within 10 working days of receipt of a written direction from an authorised person, destroy all wasp nests on the property they occupy in order to remove the health and safety risk to the public.

Management Programme

Sustained Control programme