

Yellow Jackets

Why we care

Yellow jackets seem to love summer food as much as we do. While they can be a nuisance, they are also valuable scavengers and predators of other pests. Understanding a bit about yellow jacket behavior, and natural ways to keep them at bay, will make for better picnics and a healthier environment.

Simple, positive steps

Avoid stings.

- Keep your distance. Nests are frequently located underground, under shrubs, or in rock or leaf piles. If the nest is not in your way, consider letting it be; the yellow jackets do not use the same nest for more than one season.
- Don't smash them. Squashing releases a chemical alarm that signals other yellow jackets in the area to attack.
- Move slowly. They will not sting unless disturbed. If you can't sit still, slowly brush one off with a piece of paper.
- Avoid wearing scented perfume, hair spray, lotion, deodorant, and brightly colored clothing.
- Feed pets indoors and keep garbage cans clean and tightly covered.
- If you are stung, apply ice.

Trapping & removal.

- Commercial traps allow you to bait and catch yellow jackets and then release them when you go inside.
- [Click here](#) for instructions for making your own trap. Place trap at least 20 feet from where you plan to eat.
- Removing the nest is a job for professionals. Request the use of pyrethrins rather than other types of chemicals.
- For more information on natural yellow jacket control, visit the following link.
<http://www.beyondpesticides.org/alternatives/factsheets/Wasp%20Control2.pdf>

Questions or feedback? Contact Jeanne Roy at jeanne@earthleaders.org.