



# Our Insect Enemies



## Defending Yourself Against Sinister Stingers

(NAPSA)—Many fun-filled days have come to an abrupt end due to an unfortunate encounter with a stinging insect. Familiarizing yourself with all the varieties of these sinister stingers may help keep you safe.

According to the National Pest Management Association (NPMA), these fun stealers send more than 500,000 people to the emergency room annually and can show up almost anywhere.

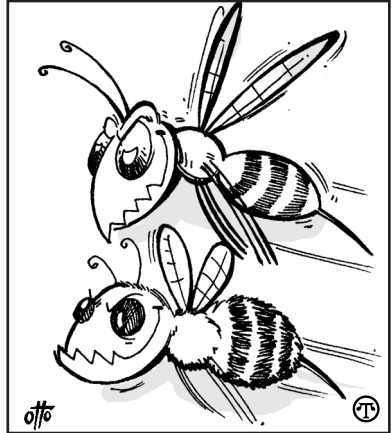
Yellow jackets, which have a yellow and black face/head and patterned abdomen, are considered one of the most dangerous stinging insects due to their unpredictable and aggressive nature.

They build their nests in the ground or cavernous areas, but frequently invade human space in search of sugary and protein-rich foods. They sting repeatedly when their nest is disturbed and reactions can be severe.

Carpenter bees, which resemble bumblebees, do not build traditional nests, but prefer to drill tunnels into soft woods.

Over time, these tunnels can severely compromise the structural stability of a building. Males are in charge of guarding the habitat, but only female counterparts have stingers. Females will only sting if threatened, but reactions to these stings can range from mild irritation to life-threatening respiratory distress.

A lesser-known stinging insect is the velvet ant. Despite its misleading name, it is actually a wasp. With short, brightly colored hairs (generally red and black), they can be seen running in open areas. Females lay eggs directly in



**It's not a good idea to swing or swat at a stinging insect. If you are stung, reactions can be severe.**

the habitat of ground-nesting bees and wasps. Only the males have wings, but what the females lack in wings, they make up for in stings. Females use a needlelike stinger to inflict a painful poke that can cause allergic reactions.

The NPMA offers these tips for protecting your health:

- Wear shoes, especially in grassy areas.
  - Overseed grassy areas to get better coverage, as this will deter ground-nesting insects.
  - Paint/stain untreated wood.
  - Remove garbage.
  - Keep trashcans lined and covered.
  - Don't swing/swat at stinging insects.
  - Seek immediate medical attention if stung, as reactions can be severe.
  - If you suspect a pest problem or want regular home inspections, contact a pest professional.
- For more information, visit [www.pestworld.org](http://www.pestworld.org).