



Hornets, Yellow Jackets, and other sweet toothed stingers

Posted by [Josh Willis](#)

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[Josh Willis](#)

[Hornets, Yellow Jackets, and other sweet toothed stingers](#)

September 11, 2017 09:12AM

Registered: 6 years ago

Posts: 134

European hornets (and/or perhaps yellow jackets - not sure) are having a blast with our apples this year. We've always been happy to take their lead for when apples are ripe (or over-)...but this year they seem to be at another level! Not just as a nuisance for people, but damaging a lot of fruit.

Reading the PennExtension website, they seemed to indicate this is an increasing problem throughout the country overall as broad-spectrum pesticides fall out of favor. I'm personally wondering if a bumper caterpillar crop last year contributed to a bumper hornet/yellow jacket crop this year. In anycase...

What to do? Ideas / suggestions?

Most recommendations I found involve traps...which I'm loathe to do for a generally beneficial insect. Unless the season for its benefit has passed, and ok to get rid of 'em? In which case, I'd also wonder about the life cycle / impact for next year...

Also from what I've read, they can fly into an orchard from quite a distance. So good luck trying to find nest(s).

Thanks all!

-J

Earthworks

Zone 7a in West-Central MD

Non-commercial, ~100 fruit trees, dwarf to MM106

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[Josh Willis](#)

[Re: Hornets, Yellow Jackets, and other sweet toothed stingers](#)

September 06, 2018 12:57AM

Registered: 6 years ago

Posts: 134

Following up a year later. Apparently all of the hornets & yellow jackets that ate much of last year's crop transformed into butterflies this year. Isn't that how it works? Well, maybe not. But it seems we have an equal number of extra butterflies this year as we did extra hornets last year.

I would love to take credit, but really it must just be something about this year's weather (though I have no idea what conditions favor heavy swallowtail reproduction). I talked to a couple other holistic grower types in the area, and they've reported the same.

Anyways...I only ever post about problems in these forums. Thought it'd be nice to post a delight, as well. 

Earthworks

Zone 7a in West-Central MD

Non-commercial, ~100 fruit trees, dwarf to MM106

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[Karen Brindle](#)

[Re: Hornets, Yellow Jackets, and other sweet toothed stingers](#)

May 07, 2019 07:44AM

Registered: 9 years ago

Posts: 103

Hi Josh, we only notice the yellow jackets in the orchard very late in the season, and only on damaged fruit. However, I was at a small ranch last fall near Spokane, WA. At times the ground seemed to be moving, there were so many in the grass. I made the mistake of stepping on a few, and immediately many bees came and started eating the dead ones! A friend from MT who was also there told us this: Get a small can of really stinky cat food. Add Frontline flea/tick topical dog product to the meat in the open can. Place in an area that other critters can't easily get to it. The bees eat it and take it back to the nest, killing them. Yes, I'd rather have butterflies, but I'm glad to have this method if the yellow jackets get out of balance/proportion on our farm.

[Vista Ridge Orchard](#)

Zone 8a in Washington
235 Cider and heritage apple trees, 72 varieties,

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