

# Wasps/yellowjackets

*Vespula* spp \*

## KEY FEATURES

Western yellowjacket



German wasp



Common wasp



- Known as yellowjackets in north America and wasps elsewhere, *Vespula* have similar impacts, habitats and pathways
- All wasps are predators and will eat almost anything
- Common wasp has a distinctive “anchor” down the centre of the face
- All have high potential for dispersal and colonization of new territories, particularly via shipping, planes and road vehicles
- Wasps have a life history that includes a hibernating, adult female able to establish a new colony alone. These “queens”, which usually stay in the nest, are larger (~ 20 mm) than the “worker” wasps (~10-15 mm – images on left) that are commonly seen
- Build nests (image on left) underground or hidden away behind retaining walls and rockeries in gardens, in cavity walls or roof spaces in buildings and abandoned burrows of rodents or rabbits. Sometimes build an exposed nest

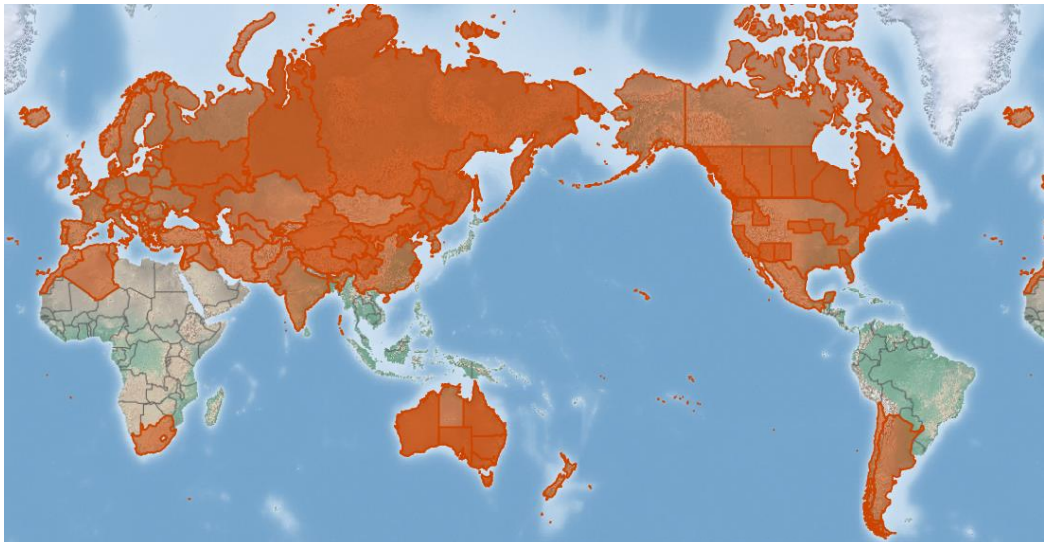
## PATHWAYS

✓ shipping

✓ timber/forestry

✓ machinery

Present



# Vespid wasps

*Vespula spp* \*

## IMPACTS



### Environment

Can kill virtually all insect life in a local, causing loss of insect-eating birds, insect pollinators of rare or endangered flowers. Adversely affects the breeding success of birds, and kill baby birds



### Health

Are very aggressive, and can sting many times. Can cause allergic reaction, anaphylaxis and occasional deaths have been reported



### Society & Culture

Affect quality of life by hindering outdoor activities, especially eating outdoors, and could cause declines of plants traditionally used or make their harvesting hazardous



### Economy

Wasps can have significant negative impacts on horticulture, apiculture (beekeeping), tourism, and animal health. Can cause loss of half of some fruit crops

## DISTRIBUTION

### Ranges

All of Europe, Iceland, most of continental Asia, United States, Canada, most of Mexico, Hawai'i (Kaua'i, O'ahu, Maui, Moloka'i and Hawai'i), Argentina, Chile, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, parts of northern Africa and the Middle East

## ADDITIONAL NOTES

\* This factsheet describes three closely related species, the common wasp (*Vespula vulgaris*), the western yellowjacket (*Vespula pensylvanica*) and German wasp (*Vespula germanica*). They have similar impacts and look similar. As their native and introduced ranges all differ, the entire range of all species is described here

## INFORMATION SOURCES (click links for more)

### Images

Western yellowjacket © Werner Eigelsreiter, German wasp Public Domain - Released by Bernie Kohl/via wikipedia - CC0, Common wasp © Timothy Evison [www.scientificillustration.net](http://www.scientificillustration.net) - CC BY-SA 2.5, all via CABI

### Text and map

*Vespula germanica* (German wasp) – CABI <https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/56667>  
*Vespula vulgaris* (common wasp) – CABI <https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/56675>  
*Vespula pensylvanica* (western yellowjacket) – CABI <https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/56670>