

## Bald-Faced Hornet



Bald-faced hornet, identifiable by black basal segments and white markings.

Bald-faced hornets are large black and white paper wasps related to yellow jackets. They build aerial nests in exposed places, usually on tree branches, although rarely they will build under the eaves of houses in wooded areas. They feed only on live prey, particularly flies and spiders. These wasps can be important biological control agents for flies.

They are social insects and the colonies consist of one queen and numerous workers. They build their nests out of plant fibers mixed with their saliva. This forms a kind of paper.

In temperate climates bald-faced hornets colonies are annual. They are founded in the spring by new queens and die in the fall. New queens are produced by the colonies in the fall and spend the winter in protected places until spring. Colonies can be fairly large with thousands of workers.

Ordinarily they would not be considered pests unless a nest is built in an orchard tree, in Christmas tree farms or under eaves.

Bald-faced hornets are commonest along the coast of California and in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, Coastal Range and Siskiyou Mountains.



Typical bald-faced hornet nest.



Bald-faced hornet nest under eaves.