

# Insec(tc)ure\*:

## Are you insecure about your insect cures?

A UT Urban IPM Lab Newsletter for the Pest Management Industry

### Paper Wasp Mating Scrum?

By Karen M. Vail

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In late summer/early fall, male and female reproductive paper wasps, *Polistes* sp. (Fig. 1), are formed in the colony. While mating strategies differ among paper wasp species, in general, males aggregate at an elevated spot (Fig. 2) to attract and mate with females. The males don't typically defend their territory, but may push and shove their way to get access to the females they attract. In the images below, it appears this male aggregation lost its grip on the light and fell to the ground during the mating tussle (Fig. 3). Males have longer antennae that are curved at the tip so most of these wasps appear to be males, but a few females are present too (Fig. 4). Males can't sting and the females aren't defending a nest at the moment, so the stinging threat should be reduced. In the past, I've received inquiries about this happening at an amusement park where paper wasp aggregations were worrying attendees waiting in an elevated line for a ride and from repairmen working on a church steeple. Control is usually not needed.



Figure 1. Male *Polistes* waiting on a window. Credit: F. Hale



Figure 2. Male *Polistes* aggregating on a soffit light. Credit: F. Hale



Figure 3. A group of paper wasps on the wooden deck below the light fixture. Credit: F. Hale



Figure 4. A close-up of the fallen wasps reveals females (straight and shorter antennae) and males (longer antennae curved at the tips). Credit: F. Hale

## A Sampling of Upcoming Category 7 PMP Educational Opportunities

**November 7, 2024** - Attendees are encouraged to bring an urban pest ant sample to stump the professor!

### 2024 TPCA Point Pursuit School

8:00 am – 3:30 pm

Patterson Park Community Center

521 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

Murfreesboro, TN 37130

<https://www.tennesseepestcontrolassociationinc.com/>

### November 14, 2024

#### TPCA Region 1 – Memphis Lunchtime Half Day School at Cook's

1:00 – 4:00 pm

Cook's Pest Control

8527 Wolf Lake Dr.

Bartlett, TN 38133

Training@oldhamchem.com

### December 3, 2024

#### Region 3 Tennessee Pest Control Association 2024 Winter School

8:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Dave & Busters

540 Opry Mills Drive

Nashville, TN 37214

Email [kayakcarol@bellsouth.net](mailto:kayakcarol@bellsouth.net)

### January 15, 2025

#### ETPCA Smoky Mountain Conference

7:30 AM - 4:30 PM

UT Conference Center

600 Henley St,

Knoxville, TN 37902

<https://www.etpca.org/event-5794725>

### Call for PMP Volunteers

The VectorEd Network, <https://www.vectorednetwork.org/>, a vector-borne disease training center, has a CDC funded project to evaluate the needs of PMPs related to vectors and vector-borne diseases. The primary objective is to assess knowledge and implementation of best practices for vector management (with a focus on ticks and mosquitoes) and correct knowledge gaps or misconceptions.

We are seeking manager (service, technical and/or training) volunteers for a one-hour interview. The interviews are confidential and will help refine survey questions for managers and applicators (licensed or unlicensed). The surveys will likely be sent out through the Tennessee Pest Control Association and/or National Pest Management Association (NPMA).

A report of the general findings will be available after the survey is completed and analyzed. A toolkit will be developed to address gaps which are identified. A working focus group will be formed to provide additional feedback on the toolkit and test the effectiveness of the toolkit prior to general release and/or availability.

If you have additional questions, would like to volunteer for an interview, and/or want to join the focus working group please reach out to the UT vector training specialist, Angela Tucker PhD, BCE, [atucke51@utk.edu](mailto:atucke51@utk.edu), or the VectorEd Network program manager, Olivia Bognanni, [opb5042@psu.edu](mailto:opb5042@psu.edu).

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To protect people and the environment, pesticides should be used safely. This is everyone's responsibility, especially the user. Read and follow label directions carefully before you buy, mix, apply, store or dispose of a pesticide. According to laws regulating pesticides, they must be used only as directed by the label and registered for use in your state.

### **Disclaimer**

This publication contains pesticide recommendations that are subject to change at any time. The recommendations in this publication are provided only as a guide. It is always the pesticide applicator's responsibility, by law, to read and follow all current label directions for the specific pesticide being used. The label always takes precedence over the recommendations found in this publication.

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