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 Professor and Extension Urban Entomologist Entomology & Plant Pathology

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.

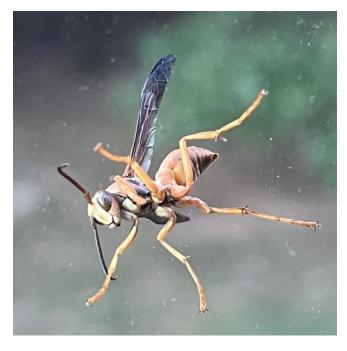


Figure 1. Male *Polistes* waiting on a window. Credit: F. Hale



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

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, <u>https://www.vectorednetwork.org/</u>, 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, or the VectorEd Network program manager, Olivia Bognanni, opb5042@psu.edu.

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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. Use of trade or brand names in this publication is for clarity and information; it does not imply approval of the product to the exclusion of others that may be of similar, suitable composition, nor does it guarantee or warrant the standard of the product. The author(s), the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture and University of Tennessee Extension assume no liability resulting from the use of these recommendations.

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