

# PestGazette



## Acrobat Ants

**T**he acrobat ant is known as such, because when disturbed, a worker raises the tip of its abdomen up over its head and walks on its forelegs, thus appearing to do a traveling handstand.

Acrobat ants are small, shiny, have a brown to black color, as well as a very distinctive heart-shaped abdomen. You may see them trailing in your house or yard, or sometimes, if you have had a previous carpenter ant infestation, they will secondarily take over affected wood galleries or nest sites.

Acrobat ants may nest in rotting or water damaged wood. The presence of these ants in structures

is often indicative of a moisture problem related to a leak. Acrobat ants never attack sound wood and structural damage associated with them is minimal.

Some homeowners become alerted to an infestation when they see grayish bits of material (fine sawdust-like excrement and ant parts) being pushed out from under a floor joint or from behind a wall void. Call a pest professional if you suspect a problem — they will be able to establish the difference between mouse and acrobat ant damage. Treating for ants and treating for mice are two very different things!



bumble bee



carpenter bee



honey bee

## Bees — Friend or Foe?

**B**y definition, the word pest is a relative term. Feeding pigeons in the park has delighted young and old alike for generations. Squirrels, woodchucks and raccoons are a treat to see when hiking through the woods on an autumn afternoon. But in the wrong environment, such as pigeons roosting at a food processing facility or squirrels nesting in an attic, even the most benign creatures can become pests.

In the summer months, backyard barbecues are often visited by uninvited stinging insects. Most would agree that insects like, wasps and hornets are pests under any circumstances. Stinging insects send more than half a million people to emergency rooms each year. Reactions to stings can range from painful to downright life threatening. Most of these stings are caused by wasps and hornets. Although capable of stinging, under normal circumstances, bees play a beneficial role in the backyard.

The vast majority of stings that occur in North America are inflicted by social wasps or hornets. Social wasps and hornets live communally in nests that can range in size from small to extremely large. Nests may be constructed underground, inside voids, under eaves or in shrubs or trees. When threatened or disturbed, these pests will respond aggressively to defend the nest with repeated stings to the offending

*Continued on page 3*



# FIRST AID for Bee Stings

## 1. Remove the Stinger

- Scrape the area with a fingernail or use tweezers to remove it.
- Don't pinch the stinger — that can inject more venom.

## 2. Control Swelling

- Ice the area.
- If you were stung on your arm or leg, elevate it.
- Remove any tight-fitting jewelry from the area of the sting. As it swells, rings or bracelets might become hard to get off.

## 3. Treat Symptoms

- For pain, take an over-the-counter painkiller like acetaminophen or ibuprofen. Do not give aspirin to anyone under age 18.
- For itchiness, take an antihistamine. You can also apply a mixture of baking soda and water or calamine lotion.
- Seek emergency assistance immediately if the sting victim has:
  - Trouble breathing
  - Feelings of faintness or dizziness
  - Hives
  - A swollen tongue
  - A history of severe allergy reaction to insect stings

### Source for first aid information:

<http://firstaid.webmd.com/allergy-insect-sting-treatment>



## Bees (continued from page 1)

party. On the other hand, some wasps, like the ominous sounding (and looking) cicada killer, are not social and are not aggressive and rarely stings even when disturbed.

Social bees, with the exception of Africanized honey bees, are rarely aggressive and almost always considered beneficial. Bumble bees and honey bees are often seen buzzing from one flower to the next in backyard gardens. Each plays an important role transferring pollen from one flower to the next. Without this important service, most of the fruit and vegetables that we rely on for food would be non-existent. On a commercial scale, honey bees also provide products like honey and beeswax.

Nevertheless, stings sometimes happen. If you are stung, it's important to know what kind of first aid to administer and when to seek medical help. See box for some first aid tips for what to do in case of a sting. ■

# BEE vs. WASP



**Usually fuzzy in appearance**

**Collect pollen as a protein source for young**

**Important bees to know: honey bees, bumble bees, carpenter bees**



**Not fuzzy**

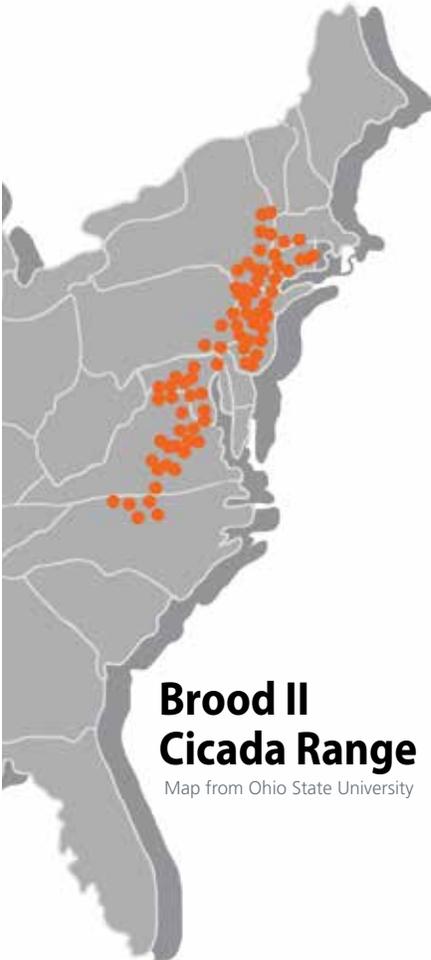
**Prey on other insects and spiders for protein to feed to young**

**Important wasps to know: yellow jackets, paper wasps, bald faced hornets**



# 17 Year Cicadas: Just the Facts

Some parts of the United States witness the emergence of large numbers of periodical cicadas this spring. Brood II cicadas emerge en masse after a 17 year absence in communities from the Carolinas to Connecticut. Although cicadas don't bite or sting, they can make quite a racket as they gather in large groups to find mates. Here are the facts you need to know about cicadas:



## Brood II Cicada Range

Map from Ohio State University

### Cicadas are not locusts

Many people mistakenly call cicada's locusts. Although they are both insects, they are completely unrelated. Locusts are closely related to grasshoppers and are a severe agricultural pest in some regions of the world.

### Cicadas don't lay their eggs in the soil

In fact, it's just the opposite. Female cicadas use their sharp ovipositor to slice into live twigs high up in trees. Once the eggs hatch, the tiny cicada nymphs fall from the tree to the ground where they burrow into the soil to feed on roots. Cicadas are not asleep for 17 years — During their time underground cicada nymphs are burrowing, growing (slowly) and feeding on juices from tree roots.

### Cicadas usually don't harm trees

Typically, cicadas cause no harm to the trees on which they are feeding. In fact, only very young trees may be harmed by female cicadas when large populations lay eggs in young branches.

### Not all cicadas take 17 years to develop

Some periodical cicadas take 13 years to develop, while other cicada species only take one year. These so-called annual cicadas are typically larger than the 13 or 17 year species and emerge later during the dog days of summer, earning one species the moniker "dog-day" cicada!

### Cicadas spend most of their lives underground

It's true, even annual cicadas spend the majority of their lives in the nymphal stage, underground, feeding on roots.

### Only male cicadas sing

Male cicadas "sing" to find aggregations or "choruses" of other males, and then sing to attract a mate. Each cicada species has a distinct "song" and experts can identify what species is present just by listening.

### There is no way to prevent cicadas from emerging on your property

Short of cutting down the trees and paving your backyard, there's no good way to keep cicadas from emerging. Periodical cicadas will begin to emerge when soil temperatures reach 64 degrees Fahrenheit, usually in April or May in most areas of the country. ■

**Live up  
a summer  
afternoon  
by sending  
your kids  
on an IPM  
scavenger  
hunt!**



# IPM Scavenger Hunt

**Integrated Pest Management (IPM) relies on common sense solutions and proactive attention by property owners. Live up a summer afternoon by sending your kids on an IPM scavenger hunt! Use this list to send your children on an educational excursion to locate pests and potential pest problems on your property. ■**



Ants



Ant nests



Crickets



Spiders



Bed bugs



Bird nests on buildings



Termite mud tubes



Carpenter ant frass (look for piles of sawdust and insect parts)



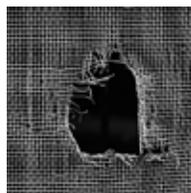
Carpenter bee holes (look for perfectly round half-inch holes in wood)



Wasp nest (stay away!)



Cracks in foundation walls



Holes in screen



Gaps under doors



Holes larger than a dime



Leaky rain gutter



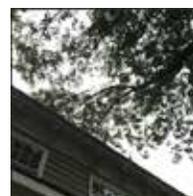
Leaky pipe



Firewood piled less than 20 ft. from structure



Outdoor trashcan without lid



Tree limbs overhanging the house