

Common Wasp

Vespula vulgaris

Insects · Active Apr–Oct · nest dies each autumn



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The familiar black-and-yellow social wasp, with an anchor-shaped black mark on the face distinguishing it from the very similar German wasp. Common wasps build a papery nest in a cavity — a loft, a bank, a wall, a shed — around Dumfries. A large nest may hold several thousand workers by late summer, and the whole colony dies off at the end of the season.

BEHAVIOUR

For most of the summer wasps are predators, catching enormous numbers of caterpillars, aphids and flies to feed their larvae, which makes them genuinely useful in a garden. In late summer the queen stops laying, the workers are no longer needed for provisioning and switch to seeking sugar — which is when they become a nuisance. Only mated queens survive the winter, in hibernation.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Social wasps (Vespidae)
SIZE	Workers 12–17 mm
STATUS	Native; common, and a significant predator of garden pests

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