



Washington
State Department of
Agriculture

PLANT PROTECTION DIVISION PEST PROGRAM

ASIAN GIANT HORNET STAKEHOLDER UPDATE #8 – JULY 1, 2020

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NEW CONFIRMED SIGHTINGS

No new confirmed sightings to report.

WSDA ADDS NEW ASIAN GIANT HORNET COOPERATORS

Just a quick welcome to our new cooperators!

- Whatcom Co. Parks & Recreation
- East Jefferson Beekeepers
- Mt. Bakers Beekeepers
- Whatcom Co. Conservation District
- CHS Agronomy
- Horticultural Pest Control Board WSU Skagit County Extension
- City of Bellingham
- Whatcom Co. Land Trust
- Western Washington University

Cooperators make an official commitment to set and monitor several Asian giant hornet traps for the season. Thank you for your support! If you are interested in becoming a cooperator, please email hornets@agr.wa.gov.

WHY DON'T WE JUST IMPORT ASIAN HONEY BEES, SINCE THEY CAN DEFEND THEMSELVES FROM ASIAN GIANT HORNETS?



The Eastern honey bee, *Apis cerana*, is one of about 12 different cavity and open-nesting honey bee species that occur in Asia. *Apis cerana* is widely kept by beekeepers in Asia, but in commercial operations it has been mostly replaced throughout its range by the western honey bee, *Apis mellifera*. The western honey bee, which is native to Europe, Africa, and western and central Asia, has been widely adopted because of its ability to

produce higher honey yields than *A. cerana*. Other factors that make *A. cerana* difficult to manage for large-scale commercial pollination and honey production include seasonal migration, and a tendency to “abscond” (abandon their hive) when disturbed.

There are other reasons to be wary of importing *Apis cerana*. Although *Apis cerana* has effective behavioral defenses against the Asian giant hornet, it is also host to multiple parasitic mites that can destroy colonies of *A. mellifera*. One of these, *Tropilaelaps clareae*, has not yet reached Europe or the Americas. Many entomologists believe that *Tropilaelaps* could be more devastating to US honey bees than the Varroa mite, and annual nationwide monitoring of US honey bee populations to prevent establishment of this parasite is a high priority of USDA-APHIS. Importing *A. cerana* might also provide a pathway for bee viruses to enter the US, creating a high risk to both managed *Apis mellifera* populations and native bee species. Finally, *Apis cerana* itself could be problematic. After being introduced to Australia and Papua New Guinea, it became highly invasive and displaced native bee species. All efforts to suppress it have so far failed.

Intentionally introducing *A. cerana* would pose a huge risk to US agriculture and native bees, and is not currently a viable solution to managing Asian giant hornets even if they become established. **It is also illegal under federal law.** As a final note, remember that beekeepers still raise western honey bees in places where Asian giant hornet is native! It takes more resources, but the industry is viable.

Photo credit: [Flickr user budak](#)

CAN PRAYING MANTIS CONTROL OR KILL ASIAN GIANT HORNETS?



A popular and gruesome video on the internet shows a large praying mantis attacking and quickly consuming an Asian giant hornet. This video, plus the predatory reputation of mantises in general, has many people wondering why we can't just use this natural control to deal with Asian giant hornets. There are a few reasons why this is not likely to be a useful strategy. First, the hornet in the video was anesthetized before filming! While it is certainly possible that a mantis could kill an Asian giant hornet in the field, it is also likely

that the hornet would kill the mantis. In fact, praying mantises are a well-documented food source for Asian giant hornet in their native range.

Even if mantises were more effective predators of Asian giant hornets, it is very difficult to maintain high enough populations of general predators to control pest insects. Consider that each hornet nest might have a few hundred active workers at maximum colony size, and that there may be multiple colonies active in the same area at the same time. A praying mantis can only eat so many insects, and they would have to be in the right place at the right time to catch one. There is no evidence that they would preferentially seek hornets or hornet nests. Other aspects of their biology that make them unlikely to control Asian giant hornet if it becomes established include a slow reproductive rate for the mantises and the fact that they will eat any insect they happen upon - in fact, they seem to prefer grasshoppers and related insects. If that rare hornet-praying mantis encounter even happens, they might already be satiated from eating other insects - including honey bees! The presence of praying mantises also changes honey bee behavior; honey bees will avoid foraging when they see praying mantises. Saturating the landscape with praying mantises (which would require an industrial insect-rearing facility) would likely have negative impacts on managed pollinators and many native insect species.

The two large praying mantises in Washington State are introduced species, and while they are an interesting and acceptable presence in our gardens, they aren't effective or specialized enough to control any species of insect – including Asian giant hornets – at a large scale. Consider [learning about our native mantis](#), which is uncommon and difficult to find.

CITIZEN SCIENTIST TRAPPING FOR ASIAN GIANT HORNET STARTS TODAY

Today is the day that many citizen scientists have been waiting weeks for. July 1 is the day that we suggested that people begin trapping for Asian giant hornets in Washington State.

Citizen scientists have already installed over **700** traps!



The bottle traps that we provided instructions for are intended to catch worker Asian giant hornets. We don't expect to see many worker hornets until perhaps August, but beginning in July would catch any that emerge early.

If you haven't put up a trap yet, it is not too late! [Trapping instructions](#) can be found on our website, along with a [trapping video](#) and [trapping FAQs](#).

Photo credit: Mark Ainsworth

CITIZEN SCIENTIST TRAPPING WITHOUT THE INTERNET

We have received a few questions from people who either don't have good access to the internet or who otherwise are having trouble registering their trap on the online public trap map. This is an important part of the trapping process because registering your traps assigns a number to the trap. The trap number is then used to report trapping results every week. Without the trap number, we won't have a way to identify where the trap collection came from.

If you are unable to obtain a trapping number for your trap for any reason, please contact our staff at 1-800-443-6684 and we will be happy to assist you in getting a trap number assigned to your trap.

We have also recently updated our printable trapping instructions to make them even more printer-friendly. Those who do not have access to the internet can call 1-800-443-6684 and we can send them the trapping instructions as well as a trap registration form.

Finally, when considering whether to begin the citizen scientist trapping program, keep in mind that if you do not have internet access, you will need to submit your specimens each week either by mailing them to WSDA or by dropping them off at one of our drop-off sites. Again, call the toll-free number for a current list of drop-off locations.

PUBLIC SPECIMEN DROP-OFF LOCATIONS NOW AVAILABLE

Now that citizen scientist trapping has officially started, several drop-off locations are now available for the public to drop off their weekly trap collections rather than mailing them in.

As a reminder, if the trap does NOT contain bees, wasps, or hornets, you can simply take a picture of the trap contents and email the photo along with the collection date and the trap number to aghtrapping@agr.wa.gov.

If you have even one bee, wasp, or hornet, the entire sample should be sent to WSDA. The sample can either be mailed in or taken to a drop-off site.

Detailed instructions for preparing a sample for mailing are available on [WSDA's hornet trapping webpage](#).

LOCATION	COUNTY	DROP-OFF HOURS	CONTACT	NOTES
Ferndale Portal Way Farm & Garden 6100 Portal Way Ferndale, WA 98248	Whatcom	Mon-Sat: 8:00 am - 6:00 pm Sunday: 10:30 am - 4:30 pm	(360) 384-3688	Place in blue cooler outside of the business
WSU Bellingham Extension Office 1000 N Forest St #201 Bellingham, WA 98225	Whatcom	Mon - Fri: 8:30 am - 4:30pm	(360) 778-5800	Place in the box inside the plastic shed next to the building shed located off N Forest St.
WSU Mount Vernon Extension Office 16650 State Route 536 Mount Vernon, WA 98273	Skagit	Mon - Fri: 8:00 am - 5:00 pm	(360) 848-6120	Place in cooler outside the main doors.
Anacortes Parks and Recreation 904 6th St Anacortes, WA 98221	Skagit	Mon - Fri: 8:00 am - 5:00 pm	(360) 293-1918	Place in cooler outside. If not there, ring door bell.
WSU Jefferson County Extension 121 Oak Bay Road Port Hadlock WA 98339	Jefferson	Mon - Thur: 8:00 am - 10:00 am	(360) 379-5610 ext. 200	Place in cooler outside the main doors.

JOINT NEWS RELEASE ISSUED TO ENCOURAGE PUBLIC REPORTING OF ASIAN GIANT HORNETS

A first for both agencies, today the Washington State Department of Agriculture and the Washington Invasive Species Council issued a joint news release requesting that the public look for and report Asian giant hornet sightings.

The news release is available on both agency websites:

<https://agr.wa.gov/about-wsda/news-and-media-relations/news-releases?article=31234>

<https://invasivespecies.wa.gov/2020/07/01/reporting-asian-giant-hornet/>

BEEKEEPING AND ASIAN GIANT HORNETS – WEBINAR JULY 9

WSDA is partnering with Washington State University and the Washington State Beekeepers Association to put on a webinar specifically for beekeepers about Asian giant hornets. The webinar will include background information about Asian giant hornets as well as information specific to beekeeping. There will also be time for questions and answers at the end of the webinar.

The webinar will be held July 9 at 7 p.m. To join, simply go to the [webinar link](#) at 7 p.m. or a little before. You can also join by phone by calling 1-415-655-0001 and entering access code: 133 385 6903.

ASIAN GIANT HORNETS HIT RADIO WAVES AND BILLBOARDS



This week public service announcements and freeway billboards will be popping up to help educate the public about Asian giant hornet and encourage reporting.

Radio ads will primarily air in Whatcom County but other areas will likely hear them as well depending on how far the radio signals are received.

In addition to the radio ads, there will be a digital billboard displayed just north of Bellingham which will be visible from both I-5 north and I-5 south. The digital billboard will have multiple displays that can change frequently while it is displayed.

USDA POLLINATOR WEEK BLOG FEATURES ASIAN GIANT HORNET

To kick off National Pollinator Week on June 22, USDA shared a new blog about Asian giant hornet and the importance of controlling the pest in order to protect pollinators.

<https://www.usda.gov/media/blog/2020/06/22/protecting-pollinators-new-threat-first-ever-us-sightings-asian-giant-hornet>

FAKE SIGNS POP UP IN BELLINGHAM



For the second time this year, fake Asian giant hornet warning signs have been posted in the state.

This time the sign was reported in Bellingham. Much like the first signs posted on trails at Tiger Mountain earlier this year, the sign combines correct information (such as our phone number and website) with misinformation (no, Asian giant hornets do not decapitate people).

One subtle clue that this is fake is that a WSDA sign would include a publication number.

Thanks for keeping your eyes open and alerting us to these fake signs!

FROM USDA'S ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE

After the recent Asian giant hornet find in Bellingham on June 6, WSDA created an additional survey grid to detect any other Asian giant hornets in the area. This grid extends the current survey grids located in Blaine and Custer and adds 291 more traps to the current survey effort. These new traps are needed considering the find, but more traps means more time in the field for existing staff.

WSDA and USDA officials discussed how best to service the traps, and the two agencies decided that both WSDA and USDA personnel will service them in the new Bellingham Grid. This, along with the traps from citizen scientists and other cooperators, shows the team effort we have in place in the search for the Asian giant hornet.