



Asian giant hornet is an invasive species that was discovered in Whatcom County in 2019. Asian giant hornets attack honey bees and other insects. They can kill an entire beehive in a matter of hours. While initially detected in Whatcom County, it is not known how widespread this pest may be.

Risk to outdoor workers

Asian giant hornets do not generally bother people unless they feel threatened. The greatest risk outdoor workers face is disturbing an Asian giant hornet nest. Asian giant hornets nest in the ground, primarily in forested areas.

1. Stings: allergic reactions and more. Asian giant hornets do not generally bother people. However, they will sting if they feel threatened. They can sting repeatedly and their venom is more toxic than that of local bees and wasps. Stings can be serious and even life threatening if you are allergic or receive repeated stings. You could be at risk for stings if you:

- step on a nest
- swat at them
- disturb them when working outdoors (brush whacking, applying pesticides, mowing roadsides, etc.)

2. Hive attacks. Once Asian giant hornets begin a group attack on a beehive, they will defend it as aggressively as they would their own nest. During this time, they are very likely to sting people approaching that hive. Use particular caution if you work near honey bee hives.

Please note that typical beekeeping attire will not protect you from Asian giant hornet stings.

What outdoor workers can do

Be especially mindful when mowing or performing vegetation management near wooded areas. Outdoor workers may want to have antihistamines available with them in case of a sting, especially if they are allergic to bee or wasp stings.

WSDA is currently working to locate and eradicate populations of Asian giant hornet in Washington. Learn about Asian giant hornet and how to identify it. If you encounter an Asian giant hornet, note the location, obtain a photograph if you can safely do so, and report it. You can report Asian giant hornet using these methods:

- Visit agr.wa.gov/hornets
- Call 1-800-443-6684
- Email hornets@agr.wa.gov

Learn more about Asian giant hornet at agr.wa.gov/hornets.



ABOVE: These Asian giant hornets will leave piles of dead bees, most of them headless, outside their beehive, similar to that shown in the photo above. This photo is courtesy of Washington beekeeper Teddy McFall. (WSDA has not been able to confirm that this is definitely the result of an AGH attack.)

