

# BEEWARE!

The Asian or yellow-legged hornet (*Vespa velutina*) has arrived.



**Asian or yellow-legged hornets are no more dangerous to us than bees, but they are a great danger to our honey bees.**

They hover in front of bee hives, attacking and killing the bees as they enter and leave the hive.

The yellow-legged hornet arrived in France in 2004 (it is thought in a shipment of ceramic pots from China) and is now widespread there.

It has been discovered in the Channel Islands, Gloucestershire and then last year in Devon where nests were destroyed to prevent its spread.

It is probable that yellow-legged hornets could reappear in England this year, and members of the public are urged to report any suspected sightings.

The hornets are active from April to November and the queens hibernate over winter. Their nests can be small, especially early in the year, but can get as big as 75 cm tall by the end of the season.

Hornets can give a painful sting: do not disturb an active nest.

There is a new app available for Apple and Android phones called 'Asian Hornet Watch' for identifying and reporting this hornet.

Or you can send sightings with a photograph and location details to:

[alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk](mailto:alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk)

# How to identify an Asian hornet

The scientific name for the Asian or yellow-legged hornet is *Vespa velutina*. It ranges from around 25 mm (1 inch) for a worker, to 30 mm (almost 1 1/4 inches) for a queen. The Asian hornet is mainly black or dark brown, with a thin yellow band and a wider orange-yellow band on the abdomen (the bulbous back end of the insect, beyond the thin waist). It also has an orange face, dark wings, and its legs go from a dark brown-black to yellow, halfway down.

Our native European hornet, *Vespa crabro* is slightly larger and looks like a very large wasp. The markings on its abdomen are a deep yellow, and black to chestnut brown. It also has chestnut (red-brown) legs and a black and brown thorax (the part of the body forward of the waist, where the wings are). It has a yellow face.

Although our native hornet is big, it is no more likely to sting people than an ordinary wasp.

Lots more information can be found by searching for 'Asian hornet' on the following UK websites:

<http://www.nonnativespecies.org>

<http://www.nationalbeeunit.com>



Native European hornet  
*Vespa crabro*



Asian or yellow-legged hornet  
*Vespa velutina*