

European Paper Wasp

The threat: European paper wasps are a public nuisance and pest species.

WHY IS THE EUROPEAN PAPER WASP A THREAT?

The European paper wasp (*Polistes dominula*) is considered an invasive species, having successfully established in many countries outside of its natural range. Like other paper wasps, this species can sting and be aggressive, but generally only when the nest is disturbed.

This wasp appears to be well adapted to urban settings, preferring to nest in enclosed spaces such as wall spaces, and thereby increasing its likelihood of being a public nuisance.

Two other paper wasp species already established in New Zealand are considered environmental pests. While not as serious a concern as *Vespula* wasps (such as the commonly seen German wasp), paper wasps are thought likely to feed on native insects and compete with native species for nectar and honeydew resources.

WHERE IS IT FOUND?

The European paper wasp is confirmed to be in the upper South Island, including Nelson, Richmond, Motueka, Picton and Waikawa. Anecdotal evidence tells us it is likely to have been in New Zealand since at least 2011 and may be widespread throughout New Zealand.

This wasp prefers urban habitats. Nests are often constructed in protected locations, such as under and within eaves of structures, in wall voids, and in many other enclosed areas.

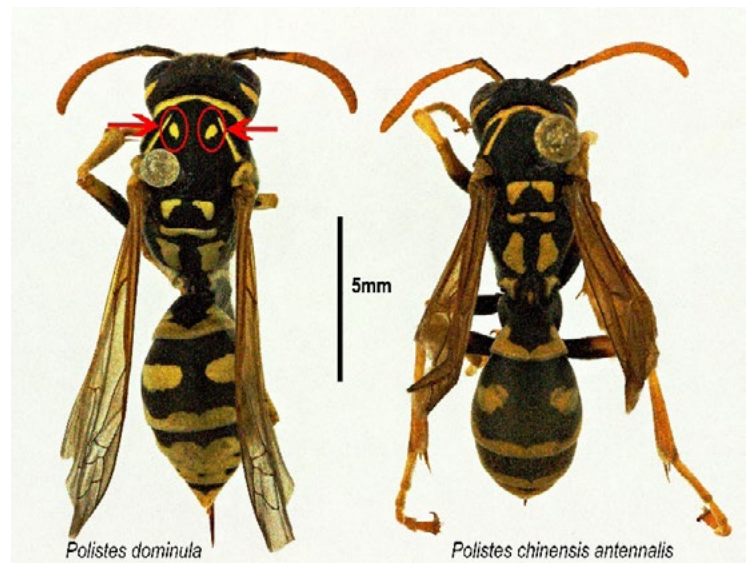
WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

The European paper wasp looks very similar to the already established Asian paper wasp. However, the two species can be distinguished by a pair of yellow spots that are found on the back of the European paper wasp but are absent on the Asian paper wasp.

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

European paper wasps should be managed in the same way as other already established paper wasps. Avoid direct contact with live wasps and call your local pest control agent if you require help with the destruction of a nest. The only effective method

of control is the treatment of nests with insecticide. Treatments should be made at night when all the workers and the queen are on the nest.



The European paper wasp (left) has two yellow spots of variable size on its back. In comparison, the already established Asian paper wasp (right) has no spots.



European paper wasp nest in roof space (Image: Hungarian Natural History Museums publications).

Contact MPI's free 24-hour pest and disease hotline 0800 80 99 66