

---

## INFORMATION BULLETIN

For Immediate Release  
2019AGRI0102-001759  
Sept. 11, 2019

Ministry of Agriculture  
Island Health  
Ministry of Health

### **Three Asian giant hornets found in Nanaimo**

NANAIMO – Three large insects found in the Nanaimo area in August have been confirmed by Canadian and international experts as Asian giant hornets (*vespa mandarinia*), the first time they have been found on Vancouver Island.

While the hornets are dormant and unlikely to be seen in fall and winter, British Columbians who think they may have seen one can report findings to the Invasive Species Council of BC at 1 888 933-3722, via the council's "Report Invasives" mobile phone app, or at: <https://bcinvasives.ca/report>

As Asian giant hornets are well known to feed on honeybees and are capable of destroying hives in a short time period, the Ministry of Agriculture is investigating how it can assist beekeepers with surveillance and trapping equipment in the spring, should other hornets emerge from their dormancy or be introduced to the area.

Asian giant hornets do not seek out human food and feed on insects only. If a nest of hornets is encountered, do not disturb the nest or the hornets and leave the area. Stings are rare but may occur if their nest is disturbed. Due to the larger amount of venom injected, a sting from an Asian giant hornet can be very painful and cause localized swelling, redness and itching.

If people are stung, as with wasp or bee stings, place an ice cube/pack or cold compress on the location to reduce inflammation and the spread of venom. Do not rub the site, as it will cause the venom to spread into the surrounding tissue. People who are stung multiple times (10 or more) have a higher risk of developing toxic or allergic reaction, such as light-headedness or dizziness. People who are stung multiple times or who develop symptoms of toxic or allergic reaction are advised to seek medical attention immediately.

#### **Learn More:**

To view photos of the Asian giant hornet, and the look-alike species bald-faced hornet, yellow jacket, elm sawfly and northern horntail, visit: [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/agriculture-and-seafood/animal-and-crops/plant-health/pest\\_alert\\_asian\\_hornet.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/agriculture-and-seafood/animal-and-crops/plant-health/pest_alert_asian_hornet.pdf)

Visit HealthLink for more information on common insect stings: <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-topics/sig44526>

And allergies to insect stings: <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-topics/rt1285>

Invasive Species Council of BC: <https://bcinvasives.ca/>

A backgrounder follows.

**Contacts:**

Ministry of Agriculture  
Communications  
250 356-7098

Dominic Abassi  
Island Health  
Communications  
250 755-7966

Ministry of Health  
Communications  
250 952-1887

Invasive Species Council of BC  
250 305-9161

---

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: [news.gov.bc.ca/connect](https://news.gov.bc.ca/connect)

---

## BACKGROUND

For Immediate Release  
2019AGRI0102-001759  
Sept. 11, 2019

Ministry of Agriculture  
Island Health  
Ministry of Health

### Facts about the Asian giant hornet

- Asian giant hornets are large headed and can vary in colour from different shades of orange, yellow and brown. Worker hornets are approximately 3.5 centimetres in length and queens can be up to four to five centimetres in length, with a wingspan of four to seven centimetres.
- Four species native to B.C. — the bald-faced hornet, yellow jacket, elm sawfly and northern horntail — are commonly mistaken for Asian giant hornets.
- These Asian giant hornets only nest in the ground, unlike other species of wasps or bees that build nests and hives in trees and/or buildings.
- It is not known how the hornets, which are widely distributed in parts of China, Korea and Japan, arrived on the Island. It is possible they were transported with personal or commercial goods.
- Hornets are generally not interested in humans, pets and large animals. They hunt insects for food, are not attracted by pollen or nectar and only attack when threatened or if their nest is disturbed.
  - People who notice a hornet's nest on their property are advised to avoid it and get professional help in removal.
  - If people have allergies to insect stings, they should avoid any contact and carry an epinephrine autoinjector (such as an epipen) during the summer season.
- If a pet is stung by Asian giant hornets only once or twice, treat it the same way as other insect stings — apply cold compresses to reduce swelling and itchiness. If a pet is stung multiple times or has a severe reaction, seek immediate veterinary care.
- The Invasive Species Council of BC is a registered charity committed to reducing the spread and impacts of non-native species within B.C. To report invasive species, a "Report Invasives" mobile phone app is available for download or visit: [bcinvasives.ca](https://bcinvasives.ca)

### Contacts:

Ministry of Agriculture  
Communications  
250 356-1674

Dominic Abassi  
Island Health  
Communications  
250 755-7966

Ministry of Health  
Communications  
250 952-1887

Invasive Species Council of BC  
250 305-9161