

# Bees, Wasps and Hornets



*What You Need to Know*

## *What are bees, wasps and hornets?*

**Bees** are fuzzy, flying insects with yellow and black stripes. There are two types of bees common in Manitoba: the honeybee (left) and the bumblebee (right).



**Wasps and hornets** have similar hairless bodies. The major difference between wasp and hornets is size and colour. Wasps (left) are about one-third inch (one

centimeter) to one inch (two and one-half centimeters) long. Hornets (right) are larger. Wasps have black and yellow rings, while hornets have black and white rings.

Bees are beneficial to humans because they pollinate plants, whereas wasps and hornets help out by eating other insects.

However, all three can be hazardous. Stings can be dangerous to those allergic to their venom – although these insects will only sting if they feel they or their nests are in danger.

Bees die after they sting. Unlike bees, wasps and hornets will not die after they sting.

### ***What are the life cycles of bees, wasps and hornets?***

Each colony of these insects has a queen. The queen can give birth to between 1,000 and 30,000 offspring, depending on the conditions of her surroundings. If the nest is located in a cool, damp place with plenty of food, the number of offspring will be high. The queen is the only member of the community that can give birth. Most wasp and hornet colonies are considerably smaller for most of the year. They reach peak size in September before frosts kill off most of the colony.

Queens can live up to five years. Drones, the males in the colony, can live for 40 to 50 days. Worker bees, the females in the colony, live between one and four months.



### ***What do bees, wasps and hornets feed on?***

Pollen and nectar are the main sources of food for bees. Pollen is a fine powdery substance found in the head of flowers (left). Nectar is a sugar-rich liquid produced by plants.

Wasps and hornets are general scavengers feeding on other insects (right), food left lying around and decaying fruit.



### ***How do I know I have a bee, wasp or hornet problem?***

The presence of many bees, wasps or hornets flying around your home is the main indicator. These insects will be hunting for food and protecting their nests. If their presence becomes a nuisance, then you have a problem.



### ***Where do bees, wasps and hornets live?***

The areas surrounding houses provide a number of ideal homes for bees, wasps and hornets. Some of these areas include verandas, ceilings, attics, walls, trees and shrubs.

The insects will find holes and small burrows and set up nests, because holes and burrows are often near food sources (such as fallen fruit, flowers or nectar-producing plants).

# How can bees, wasps and hornets be prevented?

These insects are attracted to sweet foods or decaying materials, so eliminate any food source.

Phone the Manitoba Housing Authority's Housing Communication Centre if you notice holes on the exterior of your home that could house nests for these insects.



## ***How does the Manitoba Housing Authority help get rid of pests in my home?***

If you think you have pests in your home, phone the Manitoba Housing Authority (MHA) immediately. The MHA does not recommend that you treat pest problems on your own, as doing so may cause further infestations.

**Call the Manitoba Housing Authority's Housing Communication Centre at 945-8765 in Winnipeg; or toll free at 1-800-661-4663.**

**Treatment** > A professional exterminator will be hired to treat your unit for pests. Your belongings will be respected and taken care of while your home is treated.

With your co-operation, any pest concerns can be treated without complications.