

Spring 2011



In spring Bees and Wasps will become active again.

Some of the first to appear are solitary bees which Leeds City Council are committed to safeguarding and protecting. They are hugely beneficial to the environment and worryingly their numbers are in decline. For this reason LCC will only treat where there is a significant risk to human health and as a last resort.

People are not often able to tell the difference between wasps and bees which can lead to undue stress and worry. This bulletin will help provide you with the information necessary to help identify the type of insect and what action if any, should be taken.

Bees are non aggressive and some species are unable to sting or will rarely do so unless under extreme provocation. They very rarely pose a risk to human health.

Masonry and Mining Bees look similar to each other, never swarm & are solitary. They occupy and lay eggs in small individual holes in walls or soil.

Bumble Bees will also appear around this time and are round and very hairy bees. If you find one of their mossy covered nests they should not be disturbed.

All Bees are excellent pollinators and are necessary to our countryside.

Mortar and mining bee activity will stop by the end of June and Bumble Bees by the end of September.

Honey bees have dark brown and black stripes. Only honey bees' actually swarm appearing as a mass of insects, clinging to each other.

Swarms are caused when a proportion of the worker bees leave with a queen to form a new colony. They will find somewhere to rest, such as tree branches or fences until scout bees return with suitable new nesting locations. The swarm may remain for several days.

They are usually non aggressive when swarming, only reacting if they believe the swarm is under threat. You should never approach or interfere with a swarm. If the bees getting inside the property and the swarm is inaccessible (chimneys, wall cavities) it may be necessary to treat them; this should be done professionally.

Swarms encountered have a value to Bee Keepers and any reported to LCC will be collected if accessible



Bumble Bee



↑ Typical holes made by Mining Bees



← Mortar Bee



Honey Bee Swarms



Notice the colour and body of these wasps...



↑ Honey Bee

Wasps will start to appear from **mid-April**. They are distinguishable because of their easily recognised bright yellow and black stripes and their long narrow bodies. They live in nests and from which you will see a constant stream of wasps coming in and out of the nest. Further wasp information will follow in the Summer Bulletin.