

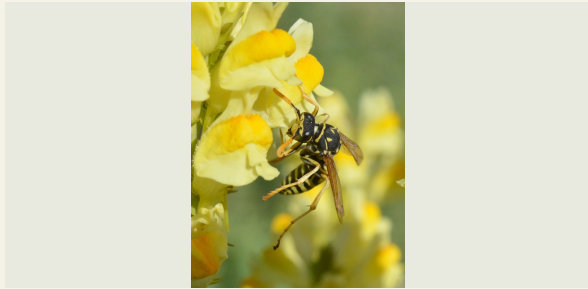
Wasp identification chart

Six regional examples | Eastern United States, with a Mid-Atlantic focus | Online Field Guide

Compare waist, markings and leg shape. Observe from a distance and leave active nests undisturbed.

1. European paper wasp

Polistes dominula



Slender black-yellow body; mostly orange antennae

Adult; sex not assigned

2. Bald-faced hornet

Dolichovespula maculata



Black body; pale face and white markings

Adult; sex not assigned

3. Yellowjackets

Vespula spp.



Compact black-yellow body; short-looking waist

Adult female

4. Eastern cicada killer

Sphecius speciosus



Very large wasp; reddish wings and yellow patches

Adult; sex not assigned

5. Great golden digger wasp

Sphex ichneumoneus



Golden front-body hairs; orange-and-black abdomen

Adult; sex not assigned

6. Blue mud daubers

Chalybion spp.



Metallic blue-black body; long thread-like waist

Adult; sex not assigned

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Comparison notes and photo credits

Wasp chart companion | Original layout and wording by Online Field Guide

Wasp	Habitat or nesting clue	Identification level	Adult activity
European paper wasp	Open paper combs under sheltered overhangs	Paper-wasp species candidate	Spring through fall
Bald-faced hornet	Enclosed aerial paper nests	Species candidate	Spring through fall
Yellowjackets	Social nests; often concealed or underground	Group first	Spring through fall; colonies grow through summer
Eastern cicada killer	Individual burrows in sunny, well-drained soil	Species candidate	Summer
Great golden digger wasp	Individual soil burrows in open ground	Species candidate	Summer
Blue mud daubers	Mud nesting sites around sheltered structures	Group first	Warm months

Nesting is a supporting clue, not an invitation to inspect a nest. A wasp visiting a flower may be far from its nest. Seasonal activity varies with weather and latitude.

Photo credits and original file links

- 1. **European paper wasp:** *Polistes dominula* - iNaturalist photo 243658853, by Dimităr Boevski. CC BY 4.0.
- 2. **Bald-faced hornet:** *Dolichovespula maculata* - iNaturalist photo 47461172, by Amy Schnebelin. CC BY 4.0.
- 3. **Yellowjackets:** *Vespula maculifrons* - iNaturalist photo 31684378, by Katja Schulz. CC BY 4.0.
- 4. **Eastern cicada killer:** *Sphecius speciosus* - iNaturalist photo 9100781, by Judy Gallagher. CC BY-SA 4.0.
- 5. **Great golden digger wasp:** *Sphex ichneumoneus* - iNaturalist photo 38075548, by Adam Kranz.
- 6. **Blue mud daubers:** Nearctic Blue Mud-dauber Wasp imported from iNaturalist photo 222892817 on 20 March 2024.jpg, by Nell Cant. CC BY 4.0.

Identification references: European paper wasp; Bald-faced hornet; Yellowjackets; Eastern cicada killer; Great golden digger wasp; Blue mud daubers.

This chart compares regional examples; it is not a complete species key.