

Yellow jacket activity heats up with weather

Homeowners advised to protect bees when responding to yellow jackets

By Bruce Porkany

Many Oregonians who have dined outside lately can attest to the fact that yellow jacket activity is starting to pick up. A hot summer may be at least partially responsible for increased visibility of the stinging insect. The Oregon Department of Agriculture emphasizes that yellow jackets are not the same as honeybees and bumblebees, and any action taken by homeowners needs to take that into account.

"We've been receiving complaints from people who are just trying to eat an outdoor meal and are unable to do so because of the yellow jackets," says ODA entomologist and pesticide expert Rose Kachadoorian. "The yellow jackets are just so quick and aggressive."

Yellow jacket activity in Oregon happens every late summer and fall. But this year, conditions are a bit different.

"We've had a lot of hot weather," says Kachadoorian. "Yellow jackets largely feed off of smaller insects. Normally there can be a lot of insects feeding on grasses and other vegetation that usually would be green. Plants may be dried and brown and, in some areas, there could be a reduction in the yellow jackets' food supply. As a result, yellow jackets might be foraging in areas they normally don't go into and maybe they are being a bit more aggressive."

There is a big difference between wasps or yellow jackets and the common bees still busy pollinating this time of year. Honeybees and bumblebees are not the ones coming after your dinner plate.



Oregon Department of Agriculture

Wasps and yellow jackets are producing queens that will be overwintering, so they are in search of protein-rich food. Most likely, there's a yellow jacket nest within a quarter of a mile of your home if the unwanted dinner guests show up. Those nests can be in the ground, under an eave, or inside a crack in a rock wall. Homeowners may be tempted to do something about annoyingly aggressive yellow jackets. A key for any pest problem is proper identification. Yellow jackets are heavy-bodied and distinctively striped yellow and black. Wasps, which have similar coloring, have a small connection between the thorax and abdomen. Both don't make as much of a buzzing sound as the honeybee.

Measures directed at a wasp or yellow jacket problem should stay clear of negatively impacting honeybees and bumblebees. There are steps homeowners can take and there are steps they definitely should not take. Spraying a pesticide product on flowers or plants won't do anything to control yellow jackets and wasps but will cause great harm to bees who are still looking for nectar and pollen.

Another option to at least slow down some of the yellow jacket activity is to purchase and erect traps that contain a bait to lure the insect. Once inside the trap, they don't escape and



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eventually die.

"Don't place traps too close to where you will eat, but around the perimeter of your yard," says Kachadoorian. "If you know you are having a backyard meal or event, you can plan ahead and use a number of these traps. It's best to get the traps out earlier in the year to attract the queens. But even this time of year, it's worth a try to use the traps." While these non-toxic traps contain a synthetic lure to attract worker yellow jackets, meat or wet pet food is often used to enhance the attraction.

The yellow jacket season will probably last for at least several more weeks if not months. Normally, the workers die out in October and November while the

queen mates with a drone and looks for a place to overwinter. Whether the extended hot and dry conditions have an impact on the timing of yellow jacket activity remains to be seen. With the threat of a painful sting and the nuisance of having them hang around your food, it's easy to forget that yellow jackets and wasps can also be beneficial insects. As predators, they will feast on caterpillars or insect life stages that might otherwise harm plants and crops. That probably counts for very little when your outdoor feast is interrupted by an unwanted dinner guest from the insect world.

For more information, contact Rose Kachadoorian at 503-986-4651.

MI TOWN

Summertime — and the living is busy these days in MI Town, as families begin to make preparations for their sons and daughters for another year of school. Whether your child is excited about his or her very first day of kindergarten or you are busy helping your off-to-college student load the car for their university experience, this is the time of year when emotions run high and just about any sentence spoken can be filled with both tears and laughter.

We're also anticipating the arrival of a new group of students at Western Oregon University in just a few short weeks, and have already seen several new young faces from faraway places as students are walking around MI Town and the campus.



PATTY TAYLOR DUTCHER
Columnist

It's been a joy to visit with these bright and smiling young men and women as they seek to find their way around our community and learn so much about an entirely different culture and language than in their home countries. It is true that the Internet has made us all more aware of other countries and their customs, but when young people arrive in a small town half a world away from all they know, it is quite a challenge and a big adjustment for everyone. Let's do our best to welcome

our newest residents to MI Town.

As we go to deadline for the column, the leading news all over the northwest — and the entire western United States — is about the devastating forest fires that are consuming so much of our beautiful area. The loss of natural resources and property is in the billions, and the deaths of firefighters cannot be described as anything but tragic — for their families, their friends and for their brothers and sisters in the fire service, who have sworn to serve and protect the rest of us from harm. This summer's unrelenting heat combined with a lack of rain has caused all of us discomfort and inconvenience, but those fighting fires — whether in our local

communities or in areas far away — have had the most difficult summer of all.

This evening is the very last of the Concerts in the Park for this summer. The Celtic group, Coming Up Threes, will entertain from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. in Main Street Park in Monmouth. Everyone is invited to share in the good times and enjoy the music.

Tomorrow night's free movie at the Independence Amphitheater is "Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day." Be sure to shop at the stores and businesses that have contributed to this summer's concerts and movies. It's wonderful to have such great events right here in MI Town.

PEDEE NEWS

Several people from the community attended the Burbank/McBeth family reunion this year, mainly because several people in the community are Burbanks or McBeths. Over 40 people in all attended this annual event, held at the Dallas Park on the third Sunday of August each year, including the youngest family member, Shawn and Ashlee McBeth's 9-month-old baby, Maverick. All who had extra family photos brought them to share, which was a great way to start the reminiscing.

Mike and Melissa McBeth could have had the youngest child at the reunion, except that their newest family member wasn't born until



ARLENE KOVASH
Columnist

four days later, Aug. 20. Their 6 pound, 8 ounce daughter is named Miley Rose. Her proud brothers and sisters are Morgan, Cheyenne, Wyatt and Levi.

Alan and Sue Garten just spent 12 days in Mossy Rock, Wash., south of Chehalis, with the Polk About Sams RV club. They camped right on Mayfield Lake and spent time taking drives to see the dam and

fishery, and visiting RV friends. The week before they had taken son Mark and his wife Stefanie's sons Bryson, 8, and Jackson, 10, to the 1,000 Trails RV Park in Newport, where the boys spent most of their time swimming in the pool. Their older son, Eric, his wife, Jaime, and son, Parker, moved to Elkhart, Ind., this summer, where he is now the executive director of the Elkhart Botanical Garden.

Judy Clark Guida traveled in her Roadtrek RV to Fairmont Resort and Hot Springs near Anaconda, Mont., for the Clark Family Reunion. Her grandparents had homesteaded in the mountains near there.

Amber Clark Chen and Brett Clark did amazing presentations regarding genealogy going back into the 1600s when the Clarks arrived on this continent. She traveled with family dogs Bango and Arlo for her first solo RV drive and explored historical sites through Washington and Idaho on the way over to the reunion.

Paul and Diane Telfer spent last week at Gleneden Beach with their children David, Helena Christianson, and Amber and families, including their four grandchildren. The weather was just perfect with one day of some rain. The toddlers loved playing in the giant sandbox of the Oregon Beach.

BIRTHS

Wyatt

Zayne Lee Wyatt was born to Zachary Wyatt and Shannon Patterson of Dallas at 10:11 p.m. on July 26 at Silverton Hospital Family Birth Center.

He weighed 7 pounds, 4 ounces, and was 19.5 inches long.

Zayne joins Evan, 7, and Wynter, 6.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 2

• **Scrabble with Betty** — 1 p.m., Independence Public Library, 175 Monmouth St., Independence. Scrabble games first Wednesday of every month. Free; refreshments and prizes available. 503-551-7687 or 503-838-1811.

• **Yarning for Others** — 3 to 5 p.m., St. Thomas Episcopal Church, 1486 SW Levens St., Dallas. Knitters and crocheters gather to make clothing and accessories for those in need on the first Wednesday of every month. 503-689-7222.

• **Helping Hands Emergency Food Bank** — 10 a.m. to noon, Monmouth Christian Church, 959 Church St. W., Monmouth. For eligible community members; available every Wednesday. 541-404-6517.

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