

Asian hornet vs similar species

Identification guide

Asian hornets can be tricky to identify as there are a number of different species which have similar markings and may be just as big.

These other species are native to Guernsey and helpful pollinators, so it's important to know who is who, so that we don't accidentally persecute native species after mistaking them for Asian hornets!

This documents highlights some of the main features of Asian hornets and different species found on Guernsey as an aid for identification.

Please note: Scales are not to size.

Asian hornet

This invasive non-native species arrived in Guernsey in 2017, making its way here from France where they are now widespread since being accidentally introduced from China in 2004.

The Asian hornet is a voracious predator of our native pollinator insects and can present a risk to the public if their nests are disturbed.

Top view



Approx. 25mm/1" in length.

Photo credit: Asian Hornet Team, Agriculture, Countryside & Land Management Services, States of Guernsey

Side view



Large orange/yellow stripe on its abdomen.

Bottom of legs are yellow.

Photo credit: Andy Marquis

Hornet mimic hoverfly

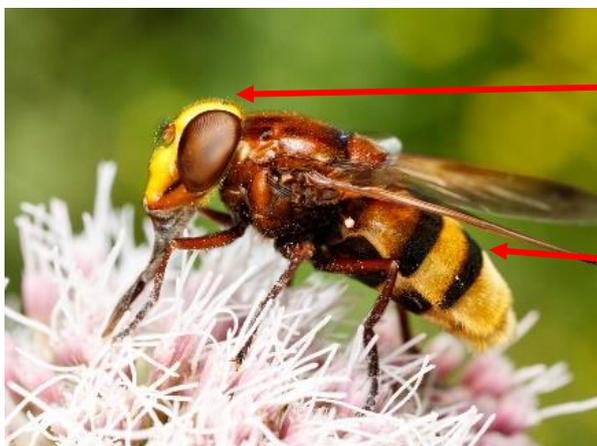
Hornet mimic hoverfly's are very good at imitating a hornet. Despite the impressive appearance they are completely harmless. Like all hoverflies, they are important pollinators and can often be seen posing on flowers.

Top view



Approx. 25mm/1" in length.

Side view



Yellow 'nose', no antennae.

Double yellow stripe on abdomen, tip of the tail is yellow.

Photo credit (both): Andy Marquis

European hornet

European hornets are not common on Guernsey and as far as we know they do not nest here. Like the Asian hornet, they are migrants, finding their way here from France. They have co-existed with native bees and other insects for thousands of years and do not pose any threats.

Top view



Approx. 30mm/1¼" in length.

Side view



Black/yellow stripes.

Legs are brown.

Photo credit (both): Agriculture, Countryside & Land Management Services

Common wasp

Wasps are really important pollinators and help gardeners by catching caterpillars and other larvae. Just like the Asian hornet, the queens emerge from hibernation in spring while the main nests appear in late summer. Most wasp nests are built underground.

Top view



Up to 20mm/1" in length.

Photo credit: Andy Marquis

Side view



Prominent black and yellow stripes.

Photo credit: Agriculture, Countryside & Land Management Services

Mining bees

Mining bees are very common throughout the spring and summer months. Although they are classed as solitary bees you often see large numbers making nest burrows in earth banks and in lawns. They can come in a variety of colours, such as grey or orange/brown as in the pictures below, and have a fuzzy thorax (the middle part between the head and abdomen). They are approximately 17mm/½" in length.



Photo credit (both): Agriculture, Countryside & Land Management Services

Ivy bees

Ivy bees are similar in size and appearance to honey bees but are more stripy. They appear in September and love to collect nectar and pollen from the ivy flowers. They are approximately 17mm/½" in length.



Photo credit: Agriculture, Countryside & Land Management Services

Red-tailed bumblebee

Red-tailed bumblebees sometimes get mistaken for Asian hornets because of their bright red tails (hence the name!). They are around the size of other bumblebees and are fuzzy all over. They are approximately 20mm/ $\frac{3}{4}$ " in length.



Photo credit: Tessa Bramall

Horntail or wood wasp

Horntails, also known as wood wasps, can be an alarming find to anyone unfamiliar with this species. What looks like a sting is in fact an egg laying tube called an ovipositor. Rest assured they are not a threat to the public and can happily go about their business!



Approx. 40mm/ $1\frac{1}{2}$ " in length.

Photo credit: Chris Shields (rspb-images.com)

Lunar hornet moth

This is a moth that cleverly mimics hornets. It is one of the larger species of 'clearwing' moths and has a wingspan of 32–42 mm. They are found throughout Europe and across the British Isles and fly from June to August. Their larvae feed on willows.



Approx. 15-20mm/ $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ " in length.

Photo credit: Andy Marquis