

ENTOMOLOGY

Murder Hornets Hit British Columbia



Murder hornets have arrived in British Columbia (B.C.). The term “murder hornet” is slang for the Asian giant hornet, a species that is normally found in Southeast Asian forests.

These hornets are three to five centimetres long, with a wingspan of four to seven centimetres, and orange and black stripes. Their stingers are one centimetre long and can release a venom. Multiple stings can be harmful to humans.

Asian giant hornets were spotted near Nanaimo, B.C., in August 2019. Since then, giant hornets have been seen in White Rock, Langley, and in the Cowichan Valley. Some were also found in Washington State in the U.S.

How they came to North America is unknown, but they could have come over on a container ship. The mild, wet climates and

extensive woodlands of B.C. are a perfect habitat for this **invasive species**. Asian giant hornets build nests near the ground, and they normally only sting when their nests are threatened. The bigger concern about them is what they might do to local bee populations.

Bees are important to food production. They **pollinate** crops, which allows them to produce fruit. A single Asian giant hornet can destroy an entire beehive in just a few hours. Asian giant hornets cut off the bees' heads and carry the bodies off to feed their young.

A beekeeper and **entomologist** in Nanaimo decided to destroy an Asian giant hornet nest. He wore multiple layers of clothing and a bee suit. The hornets stung through the beekeeper's clothes while he covered the nest in carbon dioxide.

He survived and collected samples to study, but the stings left him in pain.

Traps are being set in the Cowichan Valley and parts of Washington State to find nests and destroy them before these hornets destroy too many bees. People are advised to take photos and report sightings to the Invasive Species Council. If a nest is accidentally disturbed, run away. ★



DID YOU KNOW

An Asian giant hornet nest can be 30 degrees Celsius inside. Experts are investigating whether heat tracking can be used to find and destroy their nests.

To view videos, go to:
<http://resources.dynamic-classroom.ca/books/xoro>

Video



WORD POWER

INVASIVE SPECIES: A species of plant, animal, or insect that can cause harm in a new environment where it does not originally come from.

POLLINATE: To carry pollen from a male plant to a female plant so that it can blossom and reproduce.

ENTOMOLOGIST: A person who studies insects.

ENTOMOLOGY**Murder Hornets Hit British Columbia**

1. What is a murder hornet?

2. Describe the Asian giant hornet.

3. Where have these hornets been spotted?

4. Why is there concern about bee populations?

5. What is being done to stop the spread of these hornets?

CRITICAL THINKING

1. Why are invasive species a problem?
