

Murder Hornet

Why in news?

Recently, US had completely eradicated the Murder Hornet species in the country.

Hornets

- They are exotic *insect pests* of the *genus Vespa*
- True hornets are *social wasps*, a group of 23 species occurring naturally only in Asia, Europe and Africa.
- **Prominent types**
 - Asian hornet
 - European hornet
 - Oriental hornet
 - Lesser banded hornet
 - Asian giant hornet

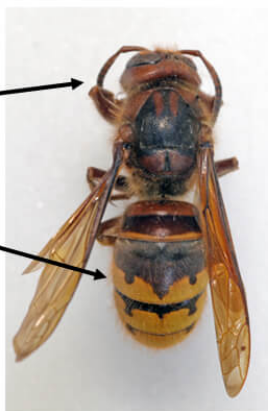
Asian Giant Hornet



Queen ~ 5 cm (~2 inches)

Allan Smith-Pardo, Invasive Hornets, USDA
APHIS PPQ, Bugwood.org

European Hornet



Queen ~ 3.5 cm (~1.4 inches)

Dr. Michael Raupp, Bug Guy, University of Maryland,
College Park, www.bugoftheweek.com

Head large,
yellow or orange

Head smaller,
chestnut or amber

Few bands, some
narrow, some
wide, margins
with dark spots

Many bands of
similar width,
margins uniform

- **In India** - Out of 23 species, 15 are found in India.

- **Murder Hornet**- Northern giant hornet are nicknamed as murder hornet, are an *invasive species from Asia*.
- **Features** - It is the *largest member of the wasp family*, measuring 2 inches in length and is the *world's largest hornet*.
- Their stingers deliver as much *venom as a snake or 7 times that of a honeybee* and its powerful sting can kill a human.
- **Threat to other species** - It poses a significant threat to insects and native pollinators.

- It poses a *threat to bees and agriculture*, can kill an entire beehive of honeybees in just 90 minutes.
- **Slaughter phase** - They kill entire hives by *decapitating the bees*.
- The hornets then defend the hive as their own, taking the brood to feed their own young
- **Threat to humans** - While attacks on humans are fairly rare, the insects are *reported to kill from 50 to 75 people each year*.

Murder Hornet 1st came under the spotlight in 2013 when they killed at least 42 people in China, and seriously injured 1,675. In USA, it was 1st spotted in Washington State near the Canadian border in 2019.

- **Co-evolution of Asian bees** - These bees will swarm onto the hornet interloper and beat their wings until they cook their quarry alive.
- Such bee-induced temperatures have been measured to reach 115 degrees Fahrenheit.

Reference

[The Indian Express| Murder Hornet Eradicated in US](#)

