

northern giant hornet Vespa mandarinia

Overview

The northern giant hornet (previously Asian giant hornet) is native to East Asia, South Asia, Mainland Southeast Asia, and parts of the Russian Far East. Outside its native range, it has been detected in Washington and British Columbia (Canada). It has not been found in any US state other than Washington (January 2023).

Brown antenna with yellow/orange base



Life Stages

Eggs, up to 1000, are laid by the queen in comb cells in Spring-Summer. The first generation of eggs are laid in small nests of about 40 cells and tended by the queens; subsequent generations are tended by workers.

Larvae and pupae develop through five instars in the comb cells and are fed regurgitated food by the queen and then workers.

Adults are gueens (reproductive females), workers (sterile females), and drones (males). Queens build the first nest of the season and produce offspring. Workers provide food, and enlarge and protect the nest. Drones mate with the queen to produce offspring.

Spring Summer Autumn Winter • Solitary queen in 1st generation workers emerge winter hibernation Males and new Overwintering • Subsequent queens mate Dissolution queen emerges workers forage and Males and workers Solitary and begins and care for brood Social phase foraging phase Mature nest peaks hibernation Newly-mated Queen founds at 4-12 combs and phase queens enter up to 3000 cells subterranean nest hibernation Queen tends to 1st New queens and generation eggs males reared **Enlarged yellow head**

Washington State Department of Agriculture, Bugwood.org **Brown thorax** Wide gap between eves and back of head 1.5-2 in (3.8-5 cm) long* Abdominal banding yellow and brown *Enlarged to show detail

More Info

Predators of honey bees, they quickly decapitate the bee and harvest the thorax for food.

Nests in the ground.

A mature nest will have 4-12 combs with up to 3000 cells.

Easily confused with other native and non-native insects: kev characteristics include:

- Size
- Thorax and abdomen color
 - · Enlarged head