



Asian hornet

INTRODUCTION TO THE ASIAN HORNET





1. Introduction to the Asian hornet

Information for the teacher

The Asian hornet (*Vespa velutina*) is an invasive species that has been present in our country since 2016. It is larger than a common wasp, but smaller than the European hornet (see Figure 2). The main identifying features at a glance:

- Dark body with one orange band on the abdomen
- Black head
- Black legs with yellow tips ("yellow socks") – which is why it is also called the yellow-legged hornet



Figure 1: distinguishing an Asian hornet from similar species (source: De Morgen)

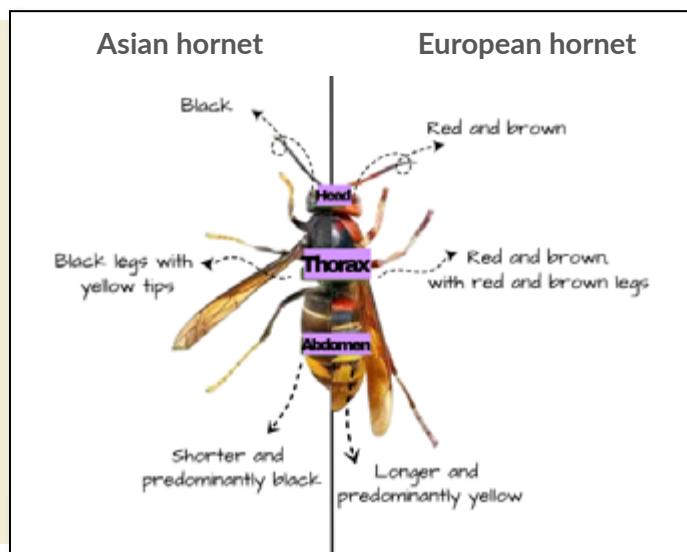


Figure 2: characteristics of the Asian and European hornet

Still having trouble telling them apart? Take a look at:

- [Learn to recognize the yellow-legged hornet | Vespawatch](#)
- [Aziatische hoornaar | Natuurpunt](#)
- [Europese hoornaar | Natuurpunt](#)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

World orientation & ecology

- Recognize the main physical characteristics of the Asian hornet and distinguish it from similar species

Citizenship

- Understand that humans play a role in the spread and management of invasive species

Communication

- Be able to give a simple explanation of what the Asian hornet is and why it receives attention



Activity



50 min

In short

In this lesson, students learn what the Asian hornet is and how to distinguish it from other insects such as bees, wasps, and the European hornet.

Materials

- Worksheet 1
- Internet access

Lesson plan

1. Class discussion: What do we already know? (10 min)

- Start with an open question on the board:
 - “What do you know about the Asian hornet?”
Let students respond freely.
Write down all answers (even incorrect ideas are useful as a starting point).
- Ask follow-up questions:
 - Have they ever seen one? Where?
 - Did they think it was a wasp?
- Create a theme column on the board (bee – wasp – hornet – “not sure”) and collect observations or assumptions together.

2. Informative explanation (15 min)

- Show clear photos of a honeybee, wasp, European hornet, and Asian hornet. You can use vespawatch.be
- Ask: “What do you notice about this insect?”
Let students name characteristics (e.g. black legs with yellow tips).

3. Comparison: bee – wasp – hornet (25 min without extras)

- Give students Worksheet 1 (see below). In pairs, they:
 - Identify characteristics
 - Indicate which insect they think they see
 - Look up information about the Asian hornet

4. Fun extras :

- **Nature reporters**
Let each pair come to the front and share their discovery using a (toy) microphone, as if they were nature reporters. Other students can respond with “ooh”, “wow”, or a small round of applause.
- **Podcast moment**
Let pairs record their discovery and feelings using a tablet or smartphone as a mini podcast “Buzz FM”. You can share the recordings with parents to involve them in the topic.
- **Quiz**
 - Create quiz questions together (true/false or multiple choice).
Examples:
 - “The Asian hornet is bigger than a bee.” ✓
 - “It only lives in Asia.” ✗
 - “It hunts other insects.” ✓

You can do this on the board or digitally (e.g. Kahoot).

Tip: share the quiz with parents.



Worksheet 1: Who's buzzing there?

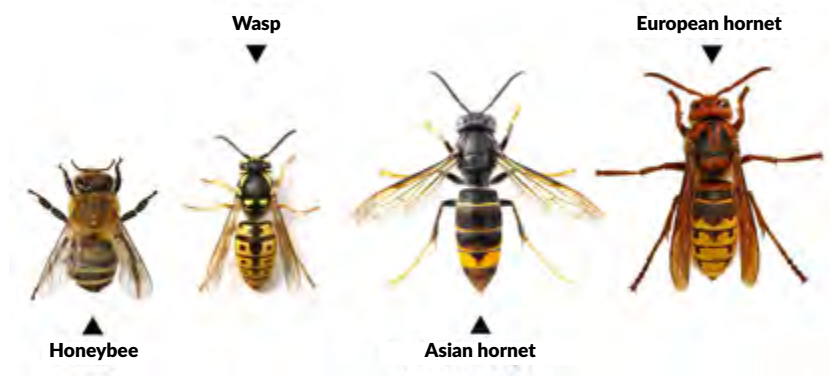
NAME:

CLASS:

DATE:

1. Insect detectives at work!

You will see four buzzing insects.



Look carefully at each insect and write down or tick what you observe!

INSECT	Head color	Leg color	Abdomen color	Size
Honeybee				☐ Small ☐ Medium ☐ Large
Wasp				☐ Small ☐ Medium ☐ Large
European hornet				☐ Small ☐ Medium ☐ Large
Asian hornet				☐ Small ☐ Medium ☐ Large



2. GUESS THE INSECT

Look carefully at the image.

Which species do you think it is?

We think it is a:

.....



3. What makes these animals special?

Use a tablet or computer and look up information about one of the following insects:

- Asian hornet
- European hornet
- Wasp
- Honeybee

Write down one striking fact and how it made you feel.

My cool fact is:

How it made me feel :

☐ Surprise

☐ Amazement

☐ Fear

☐ Curiosity

☐ Something else :

Why did you feel that way?

4. Share your discovery with the class!

What did you find most surprising, strange, or cool about your insect?

(Think of one sentence to read aloud)
