

Cicada Killer Wasp or Asian Giant Hornet?

By Candy Roach

The Asian Giant Hornet has been in the news a lot lately, so I thought I would show you a picture of what it looks like. While they are not an immediate threat to Texas, they do pose a concern because one of their main prey is the honey bee. There are several differences between our Cicada Killer Wasp and the Asian Giant Hornet that I want to point out, so you don't get alarmed when you see a Cicada Killer Wasp. I bring this up now because the Cicada Killer Wasp will start showing up in our yards around mid-June to mid-July as they emerge from the ground.

Click these links to learn more

- [Asian Giant Hornet / Molly Keck - Board Certified Entomologist with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension](#)
- [Texas Forms Murder Hornet Task Force to Save Honey Bees](#)



Asian Giant Hornet

- Eyes look like they are covered by thick yellow goggles. The yellow is actually their face
- Length: 1.5-2.0" / Largest hornet in the world
- Black legs
- Black eyes
- Banded abdomen but it can also be mostly black



Cicada Killer Wasp

- Face is not yellow
- Length: 1.0-1.75"
- Red legs
- Red eyes
- Cream yellow and jet-black abdomen

For those of you new to the San Antonio area, you may wonder, what is all that racket coming from the trees? Most likely, you are hearing the chatter of the cicadas. As the cicadas make their presence known, they will also attract the Cicada Killer Wasp. This is a very large wasp that you will normally see hovering around in your gardens from early summer through late September.

They are big and intimidating but are good for your garden and they also protect our oak trees by controlling the cicada population. The females are the hunters and have a stinger. Females are capable of stinging multiple times. They hunt cicadas and use them as food for their offspring. It is extremely rare to be stung by them. Most stings are caused when you accidentally step on this ground dwelling wasp or when her nest is threatened.

The males do not have a stinger and are noticeably smaller, by about 1", than the females. They are territorial towards other males in their areas. None of them seem too concerned about humans but out of respect, I usually give them about 3-6' of space. Also, you'll be happy to know that these wasps are normally done with their mating rituals around early September.

Happy Gardening!
Candy Roach