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Mampe: On German Yellowjackets, Fumigating for Mold, WDI Inspections

Nov 1, 2001
By: Dr. Doug Mampe
Pest Control



German Yellowjacket Species Responds to Standard Treatment

Q: I encountered a small nest of what I think are yellowjackets. The nest is in a wall void of a garage rather than in the soil. The insects certainly look like yellowjackets, and they are aggressive. However, the small size of the nest and its location in a wall void raises questions. What do you think I have, and is there anything special I need to do to treat this? I just did my usual dust treatment, and it seemed to work. M.B.

*A: I would guess that you encountered the German yellowjacket (*Vespula germanica*). It is common in the Eastern United States, and has replaced native species in many areas. It looks the same—only a specialist can tell the difference. Unlike our native pest species, which normally nest in the soil, the German yellowjacket likes to nest in buildings.*

The nest eventually grows to normal size, so you may have encountered a relatively new nest. These yellowjackets are very aggressive, however, so be careful of them.

Anything that works on our native species will work on the German yellowjacket. Sometimes, though, it is better to get professional help to treat the nest if it is in a building void.

Fumigation May Not be Best Option for Mold

Q: A library is being remodeled, and they have found molds on some of the old records and books. I have been asked to fumigate to eliminate the molds. What should I use, and is there anything special I need to know? Can the books be fumigated in the building, or should they be removed? J.V.

A: Ethylene oxide is used for fungi and bacteria, but only in vacuum chambers. You would never use it to fumigate areas as you would with methyl bromide or sulfuryl fluoride. Therefore, I have no recommendation for fumigation.

Many household cleaners kill molds. Bleach will, but it would damage the books. A product such as Sterifab is an option. It could be fogged or wiped on moldy surfaces. If you use any such product, though, make sure you do not get papers and books too wet.

Putting out the books and paper will kill the molds. Hopefully, the remodeled library will be air conditioned to dehumidify the space. Once everything is dry, it is only a matter of wiping down moldy surfaces.

Flashlight, Probe are WDI Musts