

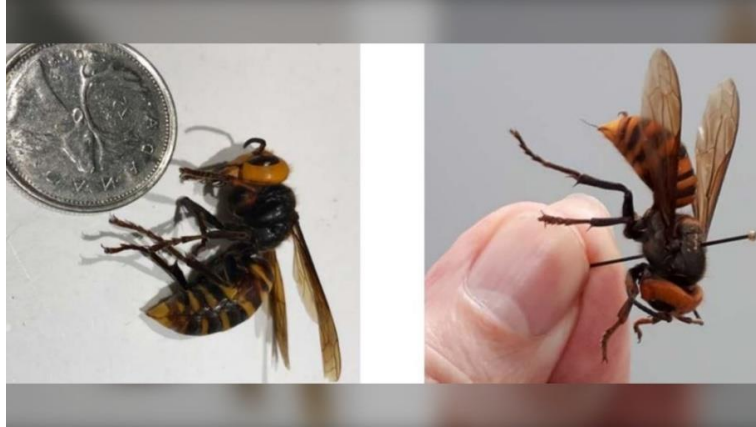
Invasive Asian giant hornets found on Vancouver Island

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For the first time ever, Asian giant hornets have been discovered on Vancouver Island.

The invasive species was found in the Nanaimo area in August, according to the Ministry of Agriculture, sparking concern for honeybee populations on the island.

Asian giant hornets are known to feed on honeybees and other large insects and are capable of destroying a beehive in a short time, according to the province.

The Ministry of Agriculture says it is already at work investigating how it can assist Vancouver Island beekeepers with hive surveillance and with trapping the invasive hornets in the spring.

While three Asian giant hornets were found in Nanaimo this summer, the province is unsure if more will appear next year as the large insect lies dormant during the fall and winter seasons.

Anyone who sees one of these types of hornets is asked to contact the Invasive Species Council of B.C. at 1-888-933-3722 or file a report through the government's "Report Invasives" at <https://bcinvasives.ca/report> or email info@bcinvasives.ca.

According to the province, the hornets make their nests in the ground and not in trees or buildings. If people stumble upon a nest, officials recommend that they avoid it and leave the area.

While Asian giant hornet stings are rare, the large volume of venom they carry can cause localized swelling, redness, itchiness and significant pain.

If stung, the province recommends that people treat it as they would a regular bee or wasp sting by placing an ice pack or cold compress on the sting to reduce inflammation and the spread of venom. Avoid rubbing the sting as it can cause the venom to spread into surrounding tissue.

The province warns that if people are stung 10 or more times, they are at a higher risk of developing toxic or allergic reactions, such as dizziness or headaches. Anyone who feels like they are developing these symptoms should seek medical attention immediately.