Australian insects: stingers guide

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**Biters**

- Use their mouths to suck blood.
- They can infect you with diseases.

**Stingers**

- Inject you with venom, which can trigger an allergic reaction.

**Key facts**

- Keep your distance – honey bees defend their nest aggressively.
- A honey bee's sting will stick in the skin and tear away from the bee.

**How to recognise a honey bee nest**

- Hive
- Nest

**If stung**

- Remove the sting as soon as possible
- Don’t try to squeeze out the sting

Dial triple zero (000) and ask for an ambulance if you suspect that either you or someone else is having a severe allergic reaction.
Common stingers

Wasps

European wasp

Key facts
• Wasps may attack a person if they are provoked or their nest is disturbed.
• Wasps can sting many times and, unlike bees, do not leave the sting behind.

How to prevent wasp stings
- Cover food and drinks
- Tightly close rubbish bins
- Don’t provoke them

How to recognise a wasp nest

European wasp nest
• Size of a basketball or bigger
• Appears to be a hole in the ground
• Report to local council for removal

Paper wasp nest
• Size of a golf ball
• Usually above ground
• Hire an expert for removal

Yellow paper wasp

15-19 mm
Common stingers

**Ants**

**Bull ants**

- Key facts:
  - Stinging ants can cause a severe allergic reaction.
  - Bull ants can deliver painful stings and are aggressive.
  - There are about 90 species of bull ant in Australia.
  - Green-head ants have a distinctive odour and their stings can be painful.

- Where they are found:
  - Bull ants are found in Australia, particularly in bushy areas under logs and rocks.
  - Green-head ants are also found in Australia.

- How to recognise a bull ant nest:
  - Bull ants will attack if you get too close to their nest.
  - They may enter houses that are close to their nest.
  - They nest outdoors in bushy areas under logs and rocks.

**Green-head ant**

- Size: 6 mm

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10-25 mm
Symptoms and treatments

Type of reaction

Local reaction

Key fact: Most people will have a local reaction after being stung or bitten.

Severe allergic reaction

Key fact: People at risk are advised to have a personal action plan to manage a severe allergic reaction.

Symptoms

Burning pain
Skin swelling
Redness
Itching
Flushing
Collapsing
Coughing or wheezing
Difficulty breathing, talking or swallowing
Itching around the eyes, ears, lips, throat or mouth
A rash that may appear anywhere on the body
Swelling of the mouth, throat or tongue
Stomach cramps

Have you been bitten or stung?
healthdirect’s Symptom Checker can help you decide what to do next
www.healthdirect.gov.au/symptom-checker
Symptoms and treatments

**Local reaction**
- Clean stung area
- Apply ice pack
- Take a painkiller
- Antihistamine tablets

**Severe allergic reaction**
- Call triple zero (000)
- Personal action plan
- Administer adrenaline via an autoinjector or EpiPen

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