



# Northern Giant Hornet

## Overview

*Vespa mandarinia*, or northern giant hornet, is an invasive pest from the tropical and temperate forests of eastern Asia. In the United States, it was first detected in Washington State in December 2019.

Northern giant hornet is not known to exist anywhere in the United States except for the far northwest area of Washington State. No sightings of northern giant hornet have been confirmed in New York State.

This introduced pest is primarily a threat to European honey bees (*Apis mellifera*). However, it is a stinging insect and could potentially be a human health concern. Northern giant hornet is generally not aggressive to humans unless provoked or threatened. They will defend a nest or foraging site. Only the female hornets are capable of stinging.

## Identification

Northern giant hornet are the largest species of hornet in the world and range in size from one inch (25.4 mm) up to about two inches (50.8 mm). Despite its size, northern giant hornet is often confused with other species that are native to United States and New York.



Photo courtesy of the Cornell University Insect Collection

New York State is home to 416 species of bees and 90 species of wasps for a total of 506 species that could possibly be mistaken for northern giant hornet. Only two of these species found in New York are close to the size range of the northern giant hornet: the eastern cicada killer and the European hornet.

## Take Action

Beekeepers should be alert for northern giant hornet as they would likely be the first to notice signs of this species if it were introduced in New York State. The best way to help experts identify a specimen is to take a photo or collect a dead specimen of the pest to help experts identify the insect. Only do this if it is safe.

Please visit: <https://arcg.is/1Ky9Gv0> to report suspected sightings of northern giant hornet.



## Species That Look Similar to Northern Giant Hornet "look alike"

Northern giant hornet on the right for comparison  
Photos by Hanna Royals (USDA), unless noted.

**European Hornet (*Vespa crabro*)**



**Various Species of Paper Wasp (*Polistes* spp.)**



**Cicada Killer Wasp (*Sphecius speciosus*)**



**Bald-faced Hornet (*Dolichovespula maculata*)**



**Dark Paper Wasp (*Polistes fuscatus*)**



Photo: Cornell University  
Insect Collection



**Various Species of yellowjackets (*Vespula* spp.)**

