

# Teens learn about disaster preparedness and how to respond to emergencies during MyPI training

My Youth Preparedness Initiative (MyPI) is an award-winning disaster preparedness program for teens ages 13–18. Nebraska Extension is piloting the program statewide.

In April and May, several area teens took part in Lancaster County MyPI, learning about Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), how to participate in a disaster response, use emergency response equipment and render first aid. It was also an opportunity to explore career options.

MyPI participants are required to do a community service component (called PREP+6). Teens use the information they've learned to help their own family plus six additional families put together a disaster response kit (i.e. winter weather kit for car, go bag for their pet) and a communication plan or evacuation plan.

MyPI graduates are certified in CPR/AED through the American Red Cross and as members of Teen CERT through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency. MyPI graduates also received backpacks filled with equipment needed for basic emergency responses.

More information and photos are online at <https://lancaster.unl.edu/4h/MyPi>. Another training in Lancaster County is being planned.



MyPI teens always use a buddy system, even when performing fire suppression techniques.



During light search and rescue training, Extension Associate Soni Cochran explains how to safely use cribbing to help lift objects off victims trapped under debris.



During the disaster simulation, MyPI teens set up an incident command structure, medical operations and search teams. MyPI instructors and volunteers from the Hickman Fire Department helped provide guidance and oversight during the simulation.



Congratulations to the first graduating class of Lancaster County MyPI: Trevor Anderson, Lexie Collins, Matthew Downey, Asher Hicks, Logan Hicks, Braden Hiser, Graydon, Kruse and Kolbe Villa. Instructors: Soni Cochran, Leo Larkin, Wilma Gerena, Joy Douglas, Tom Guilford and the late Bruce Marxsen. Providing additional instruction (not pictured) were: Phil Goering, Stan Draper and Jaci Foged.

## PRETTY THINGS THAT STING

continued from page 1

### Avoid attracting wasps

The best method to avoid wasp stings is to prevent them from nesting in highly frequented areas. Sealing holes and closing gaps in walls, capping pipes and equipment, and inspecting preferred areas will help deter nest building.

Many wasps are scavengers and will forage on a wide variety of foods, especially sweets in trash cans, open containers, spilled pop and rotting fruit. The best way to prevent wasps and yellow jackets in recreational areas is to minimize the time uncovered food and drink remain outdoors. If sweet beverages are left unattended, inspect to make sure a foraging wasp won't end up in your mouth.

### Pest status of wasps

Bees and wasps become pests when they construct nests and forage in urban areas, such as houses, schools, businesses and other locations where humans frequent. Only female bees and wasps are capable of stinging because the stinger is a modified ovipositor or egg-laying device.

In general, solitary bees and wasps do not defend their nests and are not aggressive. (Male carpenter bees and male cicada killer wasps may demonstrate territorial behavior, but they lack the ability to sting.)

Social bees and wasps can become a hazard for humans when their nests are disturbed or the colony feels threatened. This can occur when there is a ground nest of bumble bees or yellowjackets and someone mows overhead. Bumble bees and social wasps can sting repeatedly.



Paper wasps



Bumble bee



Cicada killer wasp



Mud dauber

Nests of stinging insects can be organized, disorganized, flat, layered, constructed underground, in voids, man-made cavities and/or made from paper, wax or mud.

### Treatment for bee or wasp stings

Stings inflicted by bees and wasps are characterized by moderate to severe pain, localized reddening and swelling, but most people can recover after a few days. In the case of a minor reaction to a bee or wasp sting, wash and clean the area with soap and water, and then apply a cold compress of ice to relieve the pain and

ease any swelling. Honey bees have barbed stingers, which will remain in the skin and continue to release venom until it is removed, so it is important to remove the stinger by scraping it out with a straight-edged object. Some individuals suffer life-threatening anaphylaxis in response to the venom of bees and/or wasps and require immediate medical attention (i.e. EpiPen).

### Finding and treating the nest

We do not recommend any treatment for solitary bees and wasps unless they are a health concern or causing structural damage. If honey bees swarm or established a hive in a wall void, it is best to call a local beekeeper to come and remove them. Bumble bee nests should not be treated unless absolutely necessary, as they are valuable pollinators, but where they pose a threat to humans, it may be warranted.

Though the best time to FIND the nest is during the day when foraging behavior can be observed, the best time to TREAT the nest is after dark. This is the most opportune time because temperatures are cooler and all foragers are in the nest. Attempting to treat during the day is not advisable because high numbers of active wasps increase the potential for defensive stings.

### Chemical control for social wasps

There are many products labeled for wasps with different active ingredients (toxicants) available at local hardware stores. It is best to treat the nest in early summer when colonies are below peak population numbers and aggressive behavior is not yet evident. Always read and follow the insecticide label. Do not spray indoors!

Some situations may call for a professional pest management company, especially if people/children are at risk and the nest is extremely difficult to treat. Professionals have specialized equipment and training to complete the job safely during the day.

Jim Kalisch, UNL Department of Entomology

Photos unless otherwise noted: Jody Green, Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County