



Media Release

Date: 8 September 2017

Asian hornet nest discovered in Torteval

An Asian hornet nest has been discovered in Torteval.

The nest is in a Sycamore tree approximately 9m above ground level, and is estimated to measure approximately 30cm across. The nest has been treated with a powder insecticide this afternoon by a professional pest controller. It will be removed from the tree shortly once the pesticide has killed any live hornets. Once removed, the nest will be bagged and frozen to kill any remaining unhatched larvae.

To protect public safety, the location of the nest will not be disclosed until after it has been removed, as hornets may be aggressive if disturbed.

The discovery was made by Damian Harris, a local bee keeper, and has been verified by Agriculture, Countryside and Land Management Services (ACLMS). Mr Harris said:

“As it was too overcast and showery to do anything with my bee hives, I decided it would be a perfect opportunity to go out for a walk and see if I could see any Asian hornets flying around the area of Torteval where insects have been sighted. I have a lot of bee hives on the island and it is in my interest to prevent the spread of the Asian hornet.

I wandered the lanes with my binoculars looking for anything large that could be hornets and mainly by luck saw a large egg shaped object in a tree and knew at once that this was a hornet nest. The hornets were out wandering over the surface of the nest and flying in and out.

I'm very relieved to have found it as a beekeeper and will continue looking for nests at other potential sites."

Agriculture, Countryside and Land Management Services wishes to thank members of the public and the Guernsey Beekeepers Association for their assistance with hornet sightings so far, which have played a vital role in the discovery of the nest.

The public are asked to remain vigilant, as information gathered so far indicates that at least one further nest is likely present in the southwest of the island (Torteval, St Saviour's, St Peter's) and also a nest in the Vale in the vicinity of Bordeaux and the Bridge.

It is important that any nests are found as soon as possible. Queen hornets will shortly be leaving the nest to overwinter and any queens which survive the winter will go on to build new nests next year.

Anyone finding an Asian hornet is asked to photograph the insect if possible, note the location and watch it long enough to determine the direction of travel as this may be helpful in finding a nest site.

Information about the Asian hornet and Asian hornet nests is available from the National Bee Unit's website: <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?pageid=208> (paper copies available from Raymond Falla House). There is a short video clip of an Asian hornet on gov.gg/asianhornet as well as downloadable PDF documents which highlight the differences between the Asian hornet and other similar looking species.

Sightings should be reported to Agriculture, Countryside and Land Management Services, Raymond Falla House by emailing aclms@gov.gg or telephoning: 01481 234567. Sightings can also be reported through the 'Asian Hornet Watch' app, which is free to download from the App Store. Any sightings in Alderney and Sark should be reported to the States of Alderney or Sark Government offices.

Ends

Additional Notes:

The Asian Hornet is slightly smaller than the more common native European hornet and poses a significant threat to honey bees and other pollinators.

Asian Hornet has a distinctive velvety black/dark brown thorax. The abdomen is also black/brown with the abdominal segments bordered with a fine yellow band, only the fourth abdominal segment is almost entirely a yellow-orange. The legs are black/brown with yellow ends and the head is black with an orange-yellow face. A typical worker hornet is approximately 22mm (1 inch) in length.

As with wasps and bees, the hornets have a painful sting so people should avoid direct contact and never attempt to disturb a hornets' nest.

This is not the Mandarin or Giant Asian hornet *Vespa mandarinia* which is very much larger and is found in China. It has not been found in the UK or Europe.

Asian Hornets were accidentally introduced to Charente Maritime in south west France in 2004 in a shipment of pottery from China. Since then the Asian Hornet has spread northwards through France as it colonises urban, agricultural and wooded areas.