

to love a
wasp



How do you feel about wasps?



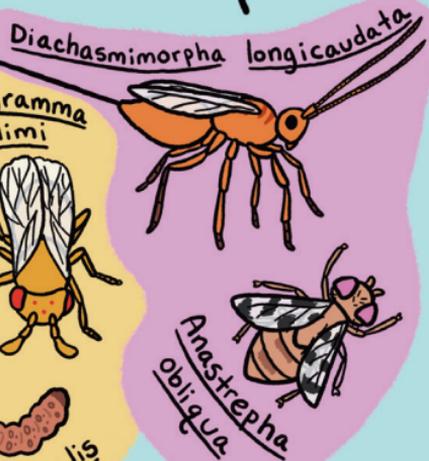
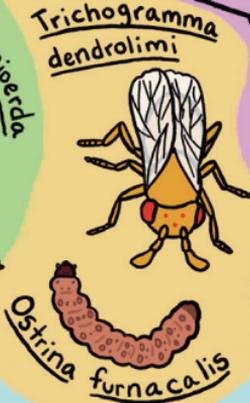
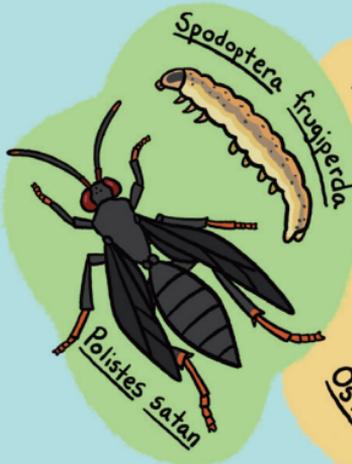
You can be honest.

Many people aren't fans of them – are even afraid of them – mostly because they can sting.

What if I told you we're so much more than that?



One of the most well-known services wasps provide is helping with agricultural pests.



But that also includes balancing the ecosystems of your backyards and gardens.

Wasps will bring their larvae mosquitoes, leaf-eating caterpillars, and more to eat. They keep the insects you don't want too many of in check.



Something less people know is that wasps are important pollinators!

Bees tend to get all the credit.



I know they're a big deal but c'mon — spread the love!

Many orchids need wasp pollinators... and will even play tricks to get them.

Epipactis helleborine



I smell like I have tasty caterpillars on me, even though I don't.



Vespula germanica

Dasycolia ciliata



Ophrys speculum



I smell like a female wasp!

And when scientists in one study prevented bumble bees from visiting whorled milkweed, paper wasps (*Polistes*) visited the plants more, making up for the potential loss in pollination.



A number of us are generalists, happy to pollinate whatever.

That isn't all wasps are doing for plants, either. Wasps also disperse some plants' seeds, moving them to new places to grow.



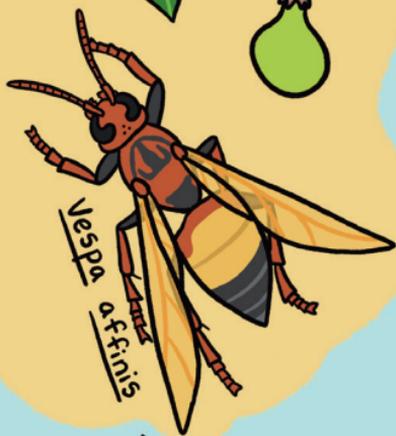
Vespa
velutina



Stemona
tuberosa



Aquilaria
malaccensis

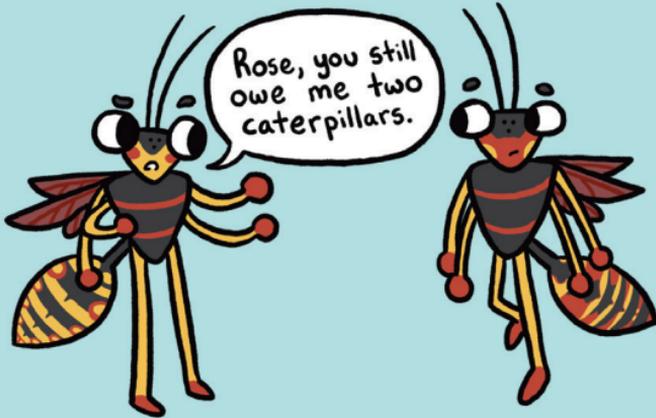


Vespa
affinis

There is less info on these interactions, but I'm excited to see what we learn in the future!

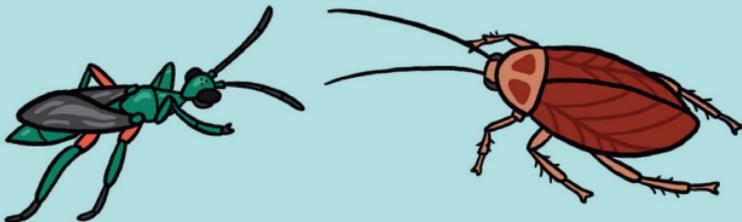


Wasps are interesting beyond what they can do for us. Northern paper wasps (Polistes fuscatus) can recognize individuals by processing each other's faces in a way similar to how humans do it!



There is plenty of weird to be found in the world of wasps, too.

The beautiful jewel wasps (Ampulex compressa) carefully inject venom into the brains of American cockroaches, turning them into "zombies" ready to be eaten by larvae.



Wasps are an incredibly diverse group of animals who do many positive things for the environments around them.



And I promise wasps aren't "mean" or eager to sting you. Solitary wasps especially have no interest, but even social species need to feel threatened.



So maybe you can reconsider, and find it in your heart to love a wasp.

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