



The British Beekeepers' Association

Protocol for Spring Trapping of Asian Hornet Queens version 2024-03-12

This protocol should be read in conjunction with the British Beekeepers' Risk Assessment: Asian Hornet Monitoring, Spring Trapping of Foundress Queens and Trapping & Releasing of Asian Hornets version 4.

The national lead lies with APHA/NBU. Therefore, if AHAT members are invited to work with the NBU, they should follow all instructions issued by NBU staff and keep information confidential as needed.

Why put out traps?

The Asian hornet (AH) is an invasive, non-native species which poses a significant threat to native pollinators and in particular to honey bees. The British Beekeepers' Association (BBKA) is working in conjunction with the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA), part of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), to establish the location of Asian hornet nests so they can be destroyed.

It is highly possible that not all secondary nests will have been identified and removed during the previous season and each over-wintered queen that is captured in the spring is potentially a nest prevented. A good example of using spring trapping as part of an eradication programme is that of Majorca.

What type of trap?

Once it has entered, an AH cannot escape. The walls/ceiling of the trap should be made from some kind of mesh (e.g. Jabeprode, Gard'Apis, Andermatt orange, or home-made equivalent), or are provided with escape holes for by-catch escape (e.g. modified Veto-Pharma trap.)

Plastic bottle/cup/dome/jar traps should be avoided. If you have to use a plastic cup type trap, make sure that it has plenty of 6- or 7-mm escape holes for by-catch, or slots as high as possible in the trap (insects tend to climb towards the light), bait is absorbed onto cloth or sponge and by-catch is released at least once a day.

Where should traps be put out and how many?

Queens will forage and migrate before setting up a nest. Most queens will set up a nest between around 1.5 and 6 km from their parental nest. Once a nest is built, foraging will probably take place within a 500-m radius. The majority of queens hibernate within 250 m of their parental nest.

NBU use traps at 1km distances on a grid within 5 km of previous nests where there is the possibility of sexuals having emerged the previous autumn, or such high densities of nests that some could have been missed (e.g. Kent).

Placement of traps

Do not place traps near open doors or windows of buildings and avoid 'corridors of pedestrian traffic'.

Do not place traps on the ground where they are easily accessible to children and animals who also may be attracted to the sweet attractant.

Due consideration should be given to the fact that grazing animals may be moved between fields. Talk to the farmer about placement of traps.

Embryo nests (start off the size of a golf ball and grown to the size of an orange) are often found on the ceilings of outbuildings, sheds and porches.

A record should be kept of where the traps have been left (eg What 3 Words or Google MyMaps).

A warning label or sign must be left with unattended traps informing the public:

- the purpose of the trap
- advising not to interfere with the trap
- contact details of the trap owner.
- the contents of the attractant liquid
- a QR code should be added to link to the NHS guidelines on stings. (The QR code is available on the BBKA website: <https://www.bbka.org.uk/other-asian-hornet-resources>)



How long do I leave the trap in position?

If left undetected the queen hornet continues laying eggs and feeding the larvae until she has raised a small brood of workers hornets, typically by the end of June. After this time, the queen and her workers will in around 70% of cases relocate to build the secondary nest often, high up in a tree.

Whenever possible traps should be checked daily and any by-catch released.

Take care when releasing insects(by-catch) from traps: some may have stings. Some insects will carry out a re-orientation flight when released and could become entangled in your hair.

What can I use as an attractant (bait)?

Emerging queens are seeking sugary sources eg nectar and sap, to build up their reserves ahead of nest building. If using commercial attractants, ensure they are licensed for sale to the general public (eg Suterra's Trappit Wasp Bait) and wear any personal protective equipment recommended by the manufacturer.

Home-made attractants should only include food stuffs eg fruit juices, brewers' yeast, ales, sugar.

Permission of the landowner

Whenever possible, but always when entering land or property where permission is required, obtain the landowner's permission before entering the site.

In a remote area eg side of a main road where the landowner is not identifiable, place traps with due care and attention for public safety.

Respect the countryside code and close gates behind you.

Personal safety

Assess any site that is unfamiliar before entering and observe any safety procedures and instructions required by the site.

Suitable footwear and appropriate PPE for the situation should be worn.

Any safety equipment provided by the site must be used as directed.

Be aware of vehicle movements at all times.

Carry a fully charged mobile phone should emergency services need to be called and check that there is a mobile signal in the area.

Always ensure someone knows where you are if working alone.

Do not climb up onto objects. Traps do not need to be placed above 1.5m high (but talk to the farmer and ensure traps are beyond the reach of any livestock).

Consider carrying over the counter anti-histamines for your own use. People who have been prescribed adrenalin auto-injectors should carry these on their person at all times and let others know you are carrying one.

Never drive immediately following an Asian hornet sting in case of adverse reaction.

Avoid spillage of attractant liquid on clothing or on the ground.

Asian hornets are very defensive when close to their nests so do not intentionally go closer than 10m.

Reporting findings back to the NBU

Have the Asian Hornet Watch app downloaded ready on your mobile to take a photo.

If an AH is captured report this to the NBU, a photograph should be sent:

- Asian Hornet Watch app on mobile phones
- Online: www.nonnative-species.org/alerts/asianhornet
- Email: alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk
- If known, copy in the local seasonal bee inspector.

Do not open any traps containing an Asian hornet. Euthanise any captured Asian hornets by wrapping the trap and placing in a freezer for 24 hours.