

## ASIAN HORNET - *Vespa Velutina Nigrothorax* - ALERT HAVE YOU SEEN THIS INSECT?



The **Asian hornet** is an apex predator, meaning that it is at the top of the food chain and mainly preys on other insects, especially honeybees. The arrival of one mated Asian Hornet queen to the port of Bordeaux, France in 2004, has been confirmed, by genetic testing, as responsible for the spawning of all of north western Europe, by this insect.

**In May, 2023, the local government in Cherbourg area of FRANCE, confirmed the presence of just under 10,000 Asian Hornet nests.** Due to Brexit, there is an increasing number of ferries and boats now arriving to Ireland on a DAILY basis. We should take note of this and be on the alert for any Asian hornets that may hitch a lift on one of these ships/boats/ferries etc.

**In the UK, summer of 2023, 72 nests found in 56 locations! On the 27<sup>th</sup> March, 2024, a confirmed sighting of an Asian Hornet in Lancashire, north west England. The insect travelled on a truck from France!**

This should be noted with alarm here in Ireland and by those trying to prevent further decline of pollinators, already under threat. Asian Hornets will feed on honey bees and other pollinating insects that we need for food/crop pollination. Note that each Asian Hornet secondary nest which progresses to it's conclusion will release 300 or 400 "foundresses" or AH Queens into the environment and these will mate and hibernate before emerging in the Spring to establish their own nests. And so the invasion has begun!





A Primary nest being constructed.

(Photo courtesy of the Jersey Asian Hornet Group.)

## Safety First

It's very important not to go near or disturb a nest if you see one. Asian Hornets are not usually aggressive towards people, but they will defend their nests, and attack, if nests are approached. Avoid their nests. Take a photo from a distance and note the location. Gardeners, tree surgeons, and farmers, are most at risk from attack as they work. Whilst Asian hornet appears to prefer high locations/trees etc. for nest building, there are increasing reports of nests being located at lower levels.

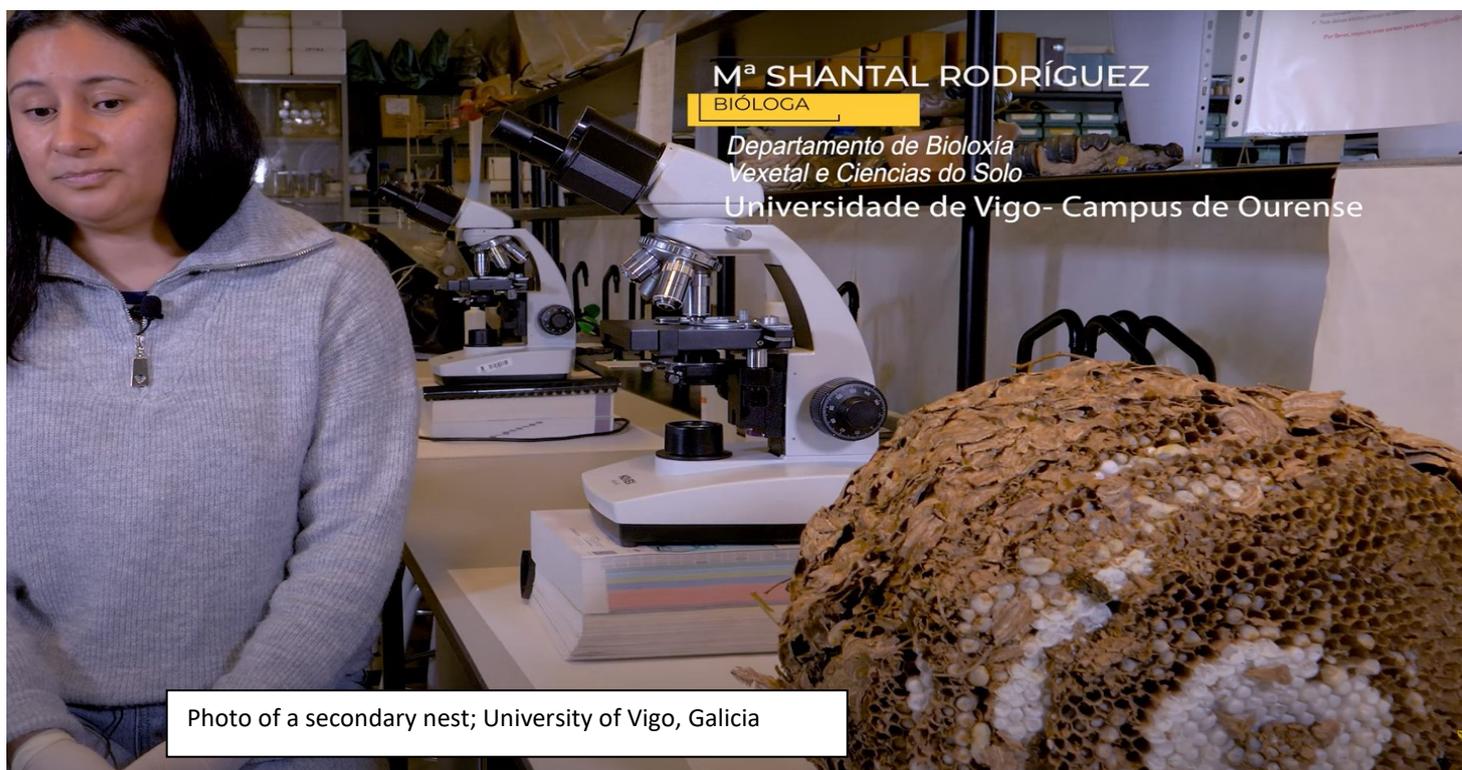


Photo of a secondary nest; University of Vigo, Galicia

These insects are meat eaters; hedgehogs have been found in their stomachs. They will eat food crops and have destroyed grape crops in Galicia in 2022. They like beer, especially "black beer", ie Guinness.

Asian hornet is a serious threat to Ireland's environment, economy, and public health. We all need to work together to watch out for these hornets and report them quickly. By being careful and informed, we can all help to protect Ireland from this invasive species. If you have an apiary and want to report a suspected Asian hornet or have concerns for bee health, contact the Horticulture and Plant Health Unit of DAFM.

E-mail: [beekeeping@agriculture.gov.ie](mailto:beekeeping@agriculture.gov.ie). Further information is available from [www.irishbeekeepers.ie](http://www.irishbeekeepers.ie).



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