

BRIDPORT and DISTRICT ALLOTMENTS SOCIETY

Newsletter

Spring 2026

Yellow-Legged (Asian) Hornet – Community Action

BADAS has recently received this email from Peter Crabbe (West Dorset Hornet Watch Co-ordinator)

Dear West Dorset Friends

We're writing to ask for your help in raising awareness of a serious and growing threat to our local environment, wildlife and public safety: the **Yellow-Legged (Asian) Hornet**.

Why this matters now

Yellow-Legged Hornets are an invasive species that prey heavily on pollinating insects. Just one Yellow-Legged Hornet nest can consume 11kg of insects in season. Once nests become established, the risk to biodiversity, food production and ecosystems is severe.

In 2025 alone there have been **hundreds of confirmed sightings and over 160 nests destroyed in the UK, including recent nests in West Dorset**. This places our area at real risk if new queens overwinter and establish here in 2026.

This isn't just a beekeeping issue; Yellow-Legged Hornets target any pollinating insect and will defend their nests aggressively. Their nests are often hidden in hedges and brambles, posing a risk to anyone working or enjoying the outdoors.

How you can help

Early detection is critical. The quicker hornets are spotted and reported, the more likely nests can be found and safely destroyed before they spread.

We're asking for your help to:

- Share awareness messages with staff, members or visitors
- Encourage people to learn how to identify and report sightings
- Display posters or ID sheets (digital versions attached or do let us know if you would like print versions)
- Support local monitoring where appropriate

Learn more and how to report

Clear identification guidance and reporting instructions can be found here:

<https://www.bbka.org.uk/asian-yellow-legged-hornet>

Contact

Contact us via westdorsethornetwatch@gmail.com

ALERT! Have you seen this insect?

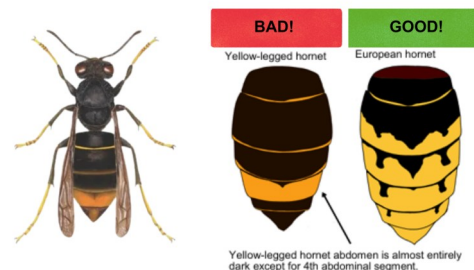
Yellow-legged Hornet

WHAT ARE THEY?

Also known as the Asian Hornet, the Yellow-Legged Hornet is a **highly aggressive predator of native insects** which poses a **threat to our honey bees and other pollinators**.

HOW WILL I KNOW IF I SEE ONE?

- Does it look **very black**?
- Has it got a **dark abdomen** with a **wide orange stripe** on 4th segment?
- Do its **legs look as if they have been dipped in yellow paint**?
- Has it got a **black head** with an **orange face**?
- Is its **thorax black and velvety**?



If you see this insect, PLEASE REPORT IT!

Members of the public who suspect they have seen a yellow-legged hornet should report it, ideally with a photo:

- by email to your local Hornet Watch team: asianhornet@westdorsetbees.org.uk
- via the Asian Hornet Watch app: available for iPhone and Android
- Online at: nonnativespecies.org/alerts/asianhornet
- by email: alernonnative@ceh.ac.uk



more information here



Dates for your diary and other notices



Bridport Allotment Society will be having a stall at
Allington Hill Country Fair on Saturday 2nd May
and at
Bridport Food Festival on Saturday 13th June

We would love it if members dropped by to chat, plant a pumpkin seed with their children or pick up a free recipe sheet.

We would also love it if any of you are able to help on the stalls, even if its only for a short time. Contact Fiona or Mandy on bridportallotmentsociety@gmail.com

Coming soon(ish)

Plant Swap Event at The Hub 16 May

Members Summer BBQ at The Hub 11 July

**Summer Pruning of Fruit Trees
With Steve Ward**

At The Hub date tbc—early/mid August

Look out for emails confirming dates and details

Chedington Compost (chedingtoncompost.co.uk)
have offered BADAS Members 5% discount on their bulk bags of composted manure etc.
See BADAS website for details of how to claim this discount.

BADAS Membership 2026

If you haven't renewed your membership for 2026 contact Membership Secretary, Mandy Rathbone, by email at manwell52@hotmail.co.uk for information on how to renew.

Newsletter contributions welcome

If you have any items you would like to see included in future issues of our Newsletter, (Published quarterly) please contact our Newsletter Editor (Mandy) manwell52@hotmail.co.uk

Contributions for the next edition welcome at any time

Seed Planting Workshop on Sunday 1st March

Steve Meek kindly agreed to run a seed planting workshop at the Community Orchard Allotment site for BADAS members. This was well-attended and Steve managed to cover a lot of aspects of this very important process. Participants were able to get hands on with seed planting in modules and consideration of different types of compost. Steve had some particularly helpful hints with regard to watering, or not watering, in order to keep seedlings healthy.

Many thanks to Steve for his time and expertise.

Steve has also written the article below on improving soil health, which I'm sure will be of great interest to all our members.



How to build great soil, whilst saving money and effort

Strong growth, and a productive plot, requires great soil. But what does that mean? I used to think that it was a just a chemical thing - lots of nitrogen, potassium and phosphate, and the more I added, the better. I now know that healthy soil isn't about the chemistry, it is about biology - the life in the soil.

As allotmenters, we can support and nurture the soil microbes that create healthy fertile soil easily, without bringing in big bags of this and that, or using poisons and chemicals. This isn't new but it has become mainstream these days, with even Monty claiming he never has bare soil and the RHS ending their use of artificial chemical inputs.

Plants encourage 'good' bacteria to congregate round their roots, by feeding them sugars, proteins and complex carbs. These bacteria decompose plant matter in the soil and provide the plants with nitrogen and potassium, whilst the fungi in the soil provide the phosphate and other minerals.

If I put soluble nitrogen/phosphate/potassium fertilisers on my soil, it will switch off the chemical signals between plant, fungi and bugs, so although it will work in the short term, the complex biology system will be disrupted and the soil life knocked back. Next time, I would need to use (expensive) chemical fertiliser again. I would become locked into a cycle of fertiliser dependency.

To build healthy soil on your allotment:

Throw away not only any herbicides or insecticides still at the back of your shed - throw out the iron phosphate slug pellets and chemical fertilisers too.

Minimise digging.

Minimise bare soil - soil bugs need roots in the ground so plant those spare lettuces, sprinkle radish seeds between your spring plantings or go for classic 'green manure' crops.

Surface mulch with your compost, manure, spent hops, any organic matter to hand. You can 'chop and drop' plants, leaving them lying on the soil where they were growing, all winter.

Leave roots in the ground - only remove problem weeds, like bindweed, thistles, docks, cinquefoil. Leave other weeds to cover over the winter - a free green manure. You can even leave the easy weeds, like chickweed, between your crops when planting.

Plants compete for light and water, but hardly ever for nutrients. Diversity of roots in the ground means a diversity of microbes and a healthy, sustainable soil - for free!

If you want to investigate further, [watch Dr Elaine Ingham on Youtube!](#)

Report from our Chair, Fiona Dare

2026 has got off to a very busy start for BADAS!

January 10th saw another fruit tree give away courtesy of the wonderful Bridport Tree Planting Group who donated a lovely selection for our members. This included fig, plum, damson and gage and it would be great if the recipients could email us a photo of their trees now that they've had a little time to settle in.

The same day saw some of the committee working to spruce up the Hub-pruning our apple trees and having a bit of a clear up.



Several committee meetings have taken place and on 1st March a members' meeting was held with Daryl from the Bridport Town Council to discuss the new Allotment Policy put out by BTC. This policy was very flawed and a consultation with BADAS members was held to get sensible re-write suggestions.

The evergreen problem of badly kept and/or abandoned plots was also discussed and it was agreed that BTC will inspect the allotment sites in March/April, then again in June (when there should be plenty of work going on) after which, anyone not keeping their plot up to scratch will get a warning letter and an amount of time to remedy the situation. If this doesn't work, then their agreements will not be renewed at the end of September. The aim is that at least 75% of an allotment should be cultivated.

BADAS now has a site-rep for nearly every allotment site. They will help to monitor plots and pick up on possible problems. They will be in contact with our committee and BTC. Hopefully, this will put an end to the problem of unused, overgrown plots. **However, we still need reps for Skilling North and St Cecilia's, so if you have a plot on one of these sites and would like to be a rep, please contact us (bridportallotmentsociety@gmail.com)**

Members enjoyed an enlightening seed planting course in early March led by Steve Meek of the Community Allotment and Bridport Seed Library and we hope to arrange a Summer Pruning course this year at The Hub.

The Hub has had more attention recently with mowing and strimming. The fruit trees are producing blossom and looking great.

We look forward to seeing many of you there at one of our events this summer.

Fiona Dare (BADAS Chair)

