

Sand Wasps



Many species and genera of sand wasps occur in the U.S. They nest in the ground during summer. They are found in many habitats but most often in open, sandy areas. Nests are often aggregated. *Bembix americana spinolas* is one of the largest and most conspicuous sand wasp. Females provision their nests with various kinds of flies, including house flies and deer flies--a very beneficial habit! A single developing young may eat two dozen flies. Adults often catch flies on the wing and are remarkably fast and agile. Their habit of hovering uncomfortably, close to a person for the purpose of catching flies attracted to that individual, is often mistaken for aggression. But they are even-tempered wasps, and it is possible to feed them out of your hand by presenting them with a living fly not quite capable of flight. Sand wasps are occasionally mistaken for hornets or yellowjackets because of their banded color pattern.