

Sand & Spider Wasps

Big World of Insects, Spiders & Bugs Series

Subject Areas: Science, Life Science, Biology

Synopsis: The sand wasp is also called a bembex wasp. See this dedicated parent as she cares for her egg by building a nest and then brings food back for the hungry larva. Spider wasps care for their young in a similar fashion, sometimes using old sand wasp holes as nests. These wasps hunt spiders to feed to their larvae.

Learning Objectives:

- Objective 1)** Students will be able to identify the parts of an insect including the head, thorax, abdomen, six legs, wings and antenna.
- Objective 2)** Students will be able to describe both the sand and the spider wasp.
- Objective 3)** Students will be able to compare and contrast these two species of insect.

Vocabulary: Define and discuss the following key terms:

Bembex, membraneous, agile, predators, prey, pollen, larva, grub, voracious, potent, paralyze, undergrowth, cunning, industrious, appropriate (take over), dormant, imminent

Pre-Viewing Questions and Discussion:

- 1) How many different types of wasps can you think of? Do all wasps live in nests or colonies?
- 2) What do wasps eat? Do you think wasps are hunters?

Post-Viewing Questions and Discussion:

- 1) Describe the sand wasp. What is another name for this wasp? What do they look like? Where do they live? What kind of weather do they like?
- 2) How are these wasps unusual?
- 3) Describe how the female sand wasp makes her nest.
- 4) What is the life span of the male sand wasp? Of the female?
- 5) How deep is the sand wasp's hole? How many eggs does the female lay in each hole?
- 6) What do the sand wasps eat for food? What do the larva need for food?
- 7) How does the mother wasp provide food for the larva? What types of food does the mother catch?
- 8) Describe the repetitive process that the sand wasp goes through.

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- 9) How many bugs can a developing sand wasp eat?
- 10) Describe the spider wasp. How is this wasp different from the sand wasp?
- 11) What does the spider wasp hunt? Why?
- 12) How does the wasp move the spider?
- 13) What does the spider wasp use for a nest? What size does the nest need to be?
- 14) Why does the spider wasp leave the immobilized spider up in the twigs and grasses rather than on the ground?
- 15) Where does the spider wasp lay her egg? What will happen to the spider?
- 16) Why does the mother spider wasp seal up the hole?

Additional Activities:

- 1) Draw a detailed picture of a sand wasp and a spider wasp. On each insect, label the head, thorax, abdomen, six legs, antenna, and wings.
- 2) How many different species of wasps are there? What are the unique characteristics of wasps? How are different wasps classified? Where can these animals be found? Can all wasps sting multiple times? How are they able to do this?
- 3) Research the life cycle of these insects. How long do the larvae take to develop? Find pictures of the larva of each insect and learn about how they transform into adults. Present your findings in a report. Include a poster that has illustrations showing the larva and the adult of each insect.
- 4) Some humans are very allergic to wasp and bee stings. Research what can happen to a person who is allergic to wasp or bee stings if they get stung. What medicine(s) does the person need if they get stung? Are some bee or wasp stings more deadly than others? Can a person develop immunity to bee or wasp stings? Present your findings in a report to the class.
- 5) Create a food web that includes these two insects, their food (prey) and animals (predators) that might eat them as well. Be sure to include plants and the sun in your food web.

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