

PARASITIC WASPS

This is a huge group of wasps ranging in size from miniscule to 4 inches in length. They are slender with long antennae and legs. Many are brightly colored and may have wings colored with blues or browns. Adults can often be seen during the day feeding on flowers of trees and shrubs. Females possess a long, thin ovipositor, which is often as long as or longer than the body. An ovipositor is not a stinger, but rather a device for laying eggs inside other insects. They attack large caterpillars, aphids, and other insects, laying their eggs on the host species with their sturdy ovipositors. Parasitic wasps serve as a very effective means of biocontrol in a garden.



**SIZE HIGHLY
VARIABLE**

The female parasitic wasp usually locates a plant species likely to contain her desired victim. She then searches the plant surface with her antennae for a suitable insect host. After laying her eggs on or in the host insect, eggs will hatch and feed upon their unfortunate host. The host will usually survive until the developing larvae are fully-grown, at which time the larvae exit out of their host. Many species of parasitic wasps can be purchased from insectaries. In addition, planting certain flowers such as fennel, dill, and cilantro can provide nectar/pollen sources that attract adult parasitic wasps to your garden.

Information from CSIRO Entomology at
<http://www.ento.csiro.au/Ecowatch/Hymenoptera/Hymenoptera.htm>

Pictures from

coverlife.org/nh/tx/Insecta/Hymenoptera/Ichneumonoidea/Ichneumonidae/#Distribution

http://entomology.unl.edu/images/beneficials/beeswasps/bene_beeswasps.htm