

Queen Wasp Traps

The spring wasp trap recipe is for springtime and early summer only and dedicated to catching queen european wasps only. Catching queens is the best and most environmentally sound method of reducing European wasps.

The trap is made from a clear 1.25L PET bottle (soft drink bottle, Milk, Orange juice or any similar container) with 3 holes of 13 -20 mm diameter about 10cm – 12 cm (100mm – 120mm) from the base of the bottle. The hole diameter is not millimetre critical but does need to be large enough for the queen wasp to enter and small enough so she cannot easily find her way out.

It is easiest to make holes using a carpentry drill bit in an electric drill but you can cut an X with a sharp knife or pointy scissors then cut the flaps off.

Screw-cap lids remain on.



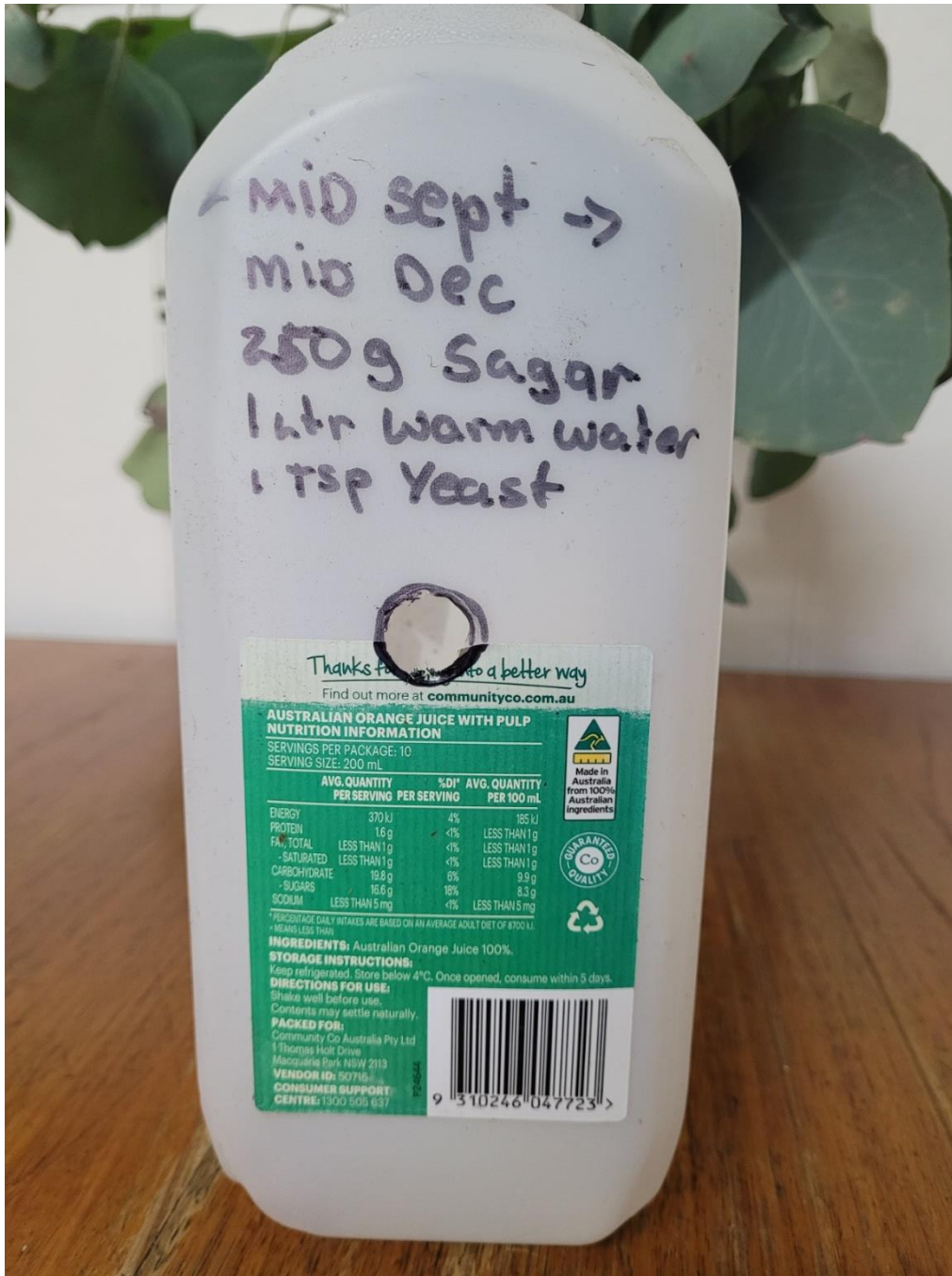
BAIT:

Mix at a ratio of 1 part sugar : 4 part hot water from the tap (not boiling water); For example 250g sugar dissolved in 1 litre water. Scale up or down to your requirements. 1 litre of water and 250g of sugar make approximately 1.3 litres of mixture.

- Dissolve 250g sugar in 1 litre ml hot water from the hot tap.
- Stir until dissolved.
- add 1 tsp yeast.
- You should end up with around 1.3 litres of mixture

Some people like to add a tablespoon or two of honey per trap.

The above recipe makes enough for (about) 2 traps.



An alternative recipe that works for some people

1 litre of 1:1 sugar water and 2 tablespoons honey. Divide this mixture between 4 traps (250 ml per trap) and allow to cool then add 1 teaspoon pure vanilla essence (red label Queen brand) for each trap NB Do not use imitation vanilla essence

Allow 1-2 days for the mix to ferment. Time to ferment depends on ambient air temperature.

How can I tell if the mix is fermenting?

When the mix is fermenting it will bubble and foam slightly and have a yeasty smell. Sometimes its not obvious until you shake the container a little. You may notice bubbles clinging to the inside of the container. If you have the above sugar content correct it should begin to ferment within an hour.

Place the bait mixture in a warm place for 1-2 days for the solution to ferment (fermenting will stop bees being attracted)

If fermenting seems slow add another teaspoon of yeast or keep warm.

Old yeast will not ferment as easily. Check the use by date.

Fermentation is important so that bees don't take the bait. The CO₂ released by fermentation may also have a role to play in attracting wasps.

If you have used 250g gram sugar recipe you won't need to dilute. Just pour 250 – 500ml into your trap and hang it outside.

If you used vanilla essence recipe, divide mixture between traps (approximately 250 ml per trap), top up with (approx) 250 ml water to below the holes.

Replace screwcaps.

TIME OF YEAR

Because hibernation is dependant on daily temperatures it is difficult to advise on best time however mid-September and October seem to be the best in NE Vic. Cooler areas will be a week or two later and warmer areas ie Melb, Bendigo, Mildura will be a week or two (or three) earlier. Temperatures appear to need to be above 15 C with a few days at 20C or more. Timing is not enormously critical as queen wasps forage for a considerable period after establishing a nest but it is best to have traps out as early as possible.

Positioning the Trap.

Hang in a sunny spot in garden.

Near a Peach or nectarine trees with curly leaf is a good place.

Near a wood heap or pile of sticks is also good as queens hibernate under bark.

Hang the trap anywhere wasps are likely to forage.

Height is not critical but 1 - 2 meters in the air seems good.

Whilst there is nothing to harm people, pets or the environment in the bait, traps should be hung out of the reach of children and pets simply to avoid interference.

Shake every few days to let bait dribble out. Keep in place until (December). Strain out when full, reuse and top up bait with water if necessary.

Replace or top up bait every few weeks. The mixture does tend to evaporate so keep an eye on it. Folk are having success with older bait but there could be many reasons for this apart from the age of the bait. Feel free to experiment.

How Many traps?

2 - 4 traps for the average house block. Larger areas should consider 4 traps per Ha or 100 meters apart on boundary lines initially. Then reduce to half that after 12 months.

CATCHING OTHER INSECTS. "BY-CATCH"

Honeybees are not attracted because of the carbon dioxide released by the fermenting yeast however we encourage users to monitor for by-catch and remove traps if you are concerned about what has been caught.

Monitor your traps for by-catch daily at first. Then check weekly. If you are catching something you are concerned about withdraw the trap and reassess. You may simply need to wait a day or two more for the bait to ferment or add another teaspoon of yeast.

It should be noted that catching one or two bees or native wasps, while not ideal, is not the end of the world. European wasps kill many bees, paper wasps, and other beneficial pollinators each day so the loss of one or two bees is not really an issue.

ANTS

If you get ants in your trap you will need to start over.

Wasps will not go anywhere near anything contaminated by ants. Wash the trap out thoroughly with hot soapy water and rinse well before rebaiting.

You can try spraying the branch your trap hangs from and the string you hang the trap with fly spray/surface spray/wasp spray. Make sure you spray BEFORE you hang the trap so that insect spray does not contaminate traps. Spraying the branch does not seem to deter the wasps from visiting traps. Another method is to stand the trap in a pot plant saucer or bucket with a little water in it. Check the bucket/saucer occasionally and top up the water as required.

Notes:

Don't be concerned if you don't catch anything immediately. It may take some time to catch queen wasps. Check traps weekly and top up if required. Some people complain because they didn't catch anything. It probably means there were no queen wasps within foraging distance: On the other hand, many people tell me they catch 20 or 30 queens in one trap a month or more after placing the trap out. A real difference can be made by working together with neighbours and community groups to cover larger areas such as river banks, parks, and vacant land.