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PROACTIVE, LOW TOXIC MANAGEMENT OF STINGING INSECTS IN SENSITIVE AREAS

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Stinging insects are among the most frequent and persistent pest problems at schools, parks, and similar locations. Responses for control are usually reactive and involve pesticides. For two years, IPM specialists from the NY State Community IPM Program, Cornell Department of Entomology, and Cornell Cooperative Extension have worked with proactive, non-toxic, and low toxic approaches to stinging insect management. These demonstrations were held at schools and other sensitive sites throughout New York State. Sites were inspected regularly for nests. Nests were removed with water sprays and other non-chemical tools. Commercially available, low toxic insecticides were also used. Additional techniques included sanitation, exclusion, vacuums, and traps. Effectiveness was evaluated by comparing the results of sites with weekly, semimonthly, and monthly inspections. "Managed" schools were also compared to nest counts at "unmanaged" schools.

Semimonthly inspections were sufficient for maintaining control of paper wasps and locating yellowjacket nests. Physical methods and low toxic sprays were effective in removing paper wasp nests. The removal of yellowjacket nests from voids was more difficult and labor intensive. Vacuums and low toxic insecticides (especially dusts) were among the most promising tools. Sanitation and exclusion were highly valuable for persistent stinging insect problems. Results of this work can be applied to many situations where risks from both pests and pesticides must be minimized, such as schools, day care, and other public facilities.