

Talking Points

Asian Giant Hornet Detections

Since Dec. 2019, the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) has confirmed the detection of several individual Asian giant hornets in Whatcom County. All of these detections were reported by alert residents.

These multiple finds indicate there's a population in the area, but USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) does not consider the population to be established. APHIS considers a pest to be established in an area when there is evidence of a reproducing population over multiple years.

WSDA is currently surveying the State for AGH. Should WSDA locate any nests, they will respond quickly to eradicate them. People in Washington State should report possible sightings through the WSDA [website](#).

AGH does not attack people unless it feels threatened. Most of the time, the hornets feed on insects, sap, and soft fruits. They are known to attack and kill bee hives in the late summer and early fall when developing males and future queens need protein.

USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is closely monitoring the situation in Washington. We are also providing technical and financial support to WSDA. At this time, we do not have any evidence that AGH is present in any other State. Please visit APHIS' [Asian Giant Hornet](#) website for more information.

APHIS researchers have determined that humans are unlikely to accidentally spread the Asian giant hornet, although this species' arrival in North America shows that human assisted movement is possible.

Research indicates that closely related hornet species with similar flight capacities spread naturally rather than by human-assisted means.

APHIS' research shows that natural dispersal is the most likely pathway for AGH to spread from the Pacific Northwest to other parts of the United States.

If asked:

We do not know where these AGH specimens came from. WSDA is currently looking for AGH nests but hasn't found one yet. This is an evolving situation, and we are closely monitoring it.

Officials in British Columbia, Canada, have also confirmed several detections of AGH in the southwestern part of the province. This includes a single nest in the Nanaimo area of Vancouver Island in August 2019. Canadian officials destroyed that nest.

Outside of Washington, report potential sightings to your [state apiary inspector](#).