

Using Yellowjacket Traps as Decoys

Many people are now familiar with commercial yellowjacket traps. The traps consist of a container designed so that yellowjackets can enter but not leave. Some contain a liquid bait while others are dry. Yellowjacket wasps are drawn to the trap by either an artificial attractant or by the scent of food placed inside. Traps are hung in areas where wasps can find them and are most effective toward the end of summer when yellowjackets are the most numerous and bothersome.

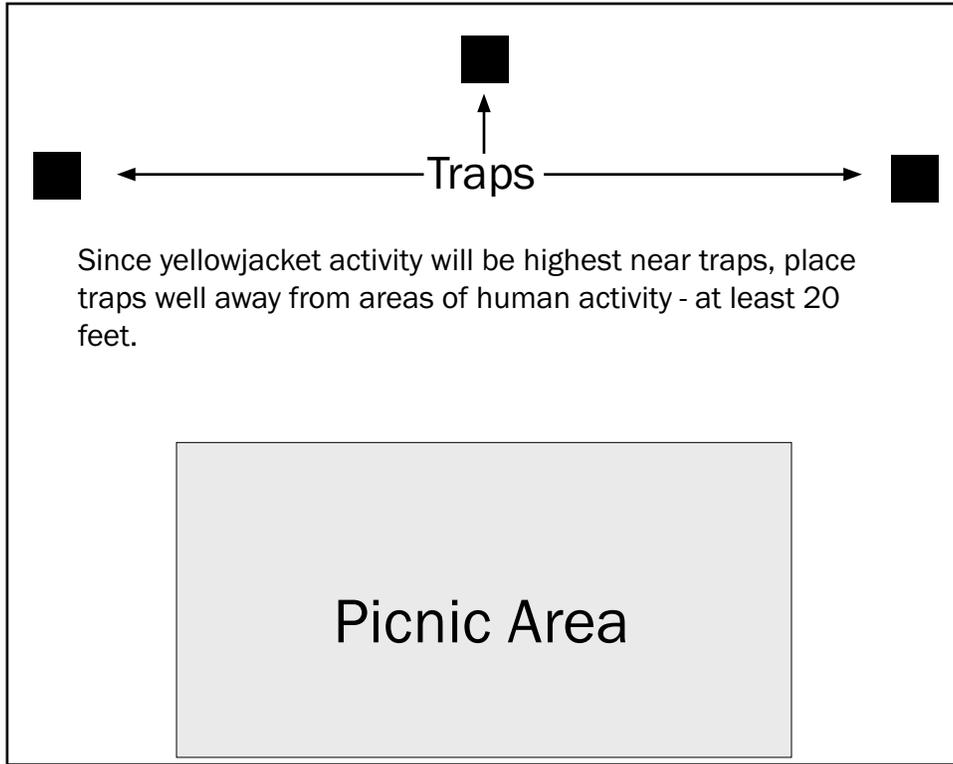
Traps can be very good at catching large number of wasps. However, they are **not** effective for eliminating colonies. Healthy colonies can produce more replacement wasps than traps can trap. The real usefulness of these devices is as temporary decoys to draw bothersome wasps away from one area to another. For example, suppose you would like to reduce the number of yellowjacket wasps attending your late summer barbecue picnic. One way to do this is to set highly attractive traps at a safe distance from your picnic that will draw wasps away from your guests (Figure 1). Leave traps up as long as they continue to attract wasp activity. When activity drops off the traps can be taken down.

Any of the commercially available yellowjacket traps will work for this purpose. Traps that use a synthetic attractant are likely to be more effective since these have a more powerful (and expensive) attractant. **Do not spill artificial attractant on yourself.** Traps are either “rechargeable” or disposable. Both types will work.

Place fresh traps the morning of your outdoor event. Place traps at least 20 feet from where your guests will be gathering. Tell children to stay away from the traps. Consider surrounding traps with yellow “Danger - Keep Away” type tape. Use 2 or 3 traps per acre.

Limit the amount of exposed food and drink as these will compete with traps for the wasp's attention. Cover food dishes and move the grill as far as possible from where people eat. Drinks should be poured into glasses to reduce the danger of “drinking” a yellowjacket that might be lurking inside the can. Finally, cover trash cans or move them away from guests.

See www.LivingWithBugs.com for additional information.



Since yellowjacket activity will be highest near traps, place traps well away from areas of human activity - at least 20 feet.

Figure 1. Using yellowjacket traps as decoys. Put fresh traps up the morning of the outdoor event. Use 2 or 3 traps per acre. Limit the amount of exposed food and drink.