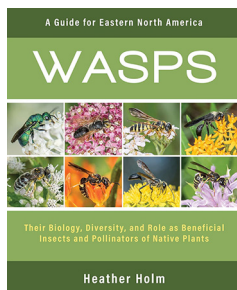


ENTOMOLOGY

Wasps: a Guide for Eastern North America: their Biology, Diversity, and Role as Beneficial Insects and Pollinators of Native Plants

By Heather Holm. 2022. Pollination Press LLC. 416 pages, 39.95 USD, Paper.

From the author of other related works, including *Pollinators of Native Plants* (Pollination Press LLC, 2014) and *Bees: an Identification and Native Plant Forage Guide* (Pollination Press LLC, 2017), *Wasps* is a worthy addition to your library. This is a substantial book—416 pages, 27.5 cm



× 22.5 cm, and 1.8 kg—best suited as a desk copy or reference book versus a field guide. Of excellent quality, the many photos and diagrams are high resolution and well captioned. The book consists of 18 chapters plus a well-designed Glossary, Bibliography, and Index, which includes a three-page photographic guide to wasp genera (pp. 412–414).

Following a short general introduction, the first five chapters of *Wasps* cover ecological basics, including classification, sociality, nesting behaviour, life cycles, anatomy, diet, and the ecosystem services provided by wasps. Totalling 64 pages, these sections provide fascinating information and vivid photography. The diet and ecosystem services sections are particularly interesting, giving wasps well-deserved recognition as pollinators and actors in invasive species and pest insect control. The next 12 chapters (Chapter 6 to Chapter 17) are each dedicated to a wasp family and are further organized by subfamily, then genus.

Each genus is represented by one species, and each two-page species entry provides details such as seasonality, appearance, nesting biology, prey, range, and native nectar plants for that species. Many species entries also include one or two interesting facts or quotes from wasp reference works from the 1900s.

The final chapter (Chapter 18) contains a planting guide for eastern North America divided into geographic areas, e.g., Mid-Atlantic, Great Lakes, and Atlantic Maritime. It includes a two-page wasp-plant interaction guide that indicates which wasp genera visit which genera of plants. This was developed from “thousands of citizen scientist wasp-plant interaction observations in eastern North America” (p. 385). Each geographic region has a full-page planting guide listing the scientific and common names of native wasp-friendly perennial plants, vines, and shrubs suitable for that region.

This book is not intended as an exhaustive identification guide to wasp species—there are no dichotomous keys, and most of the parasitic wasps are not included. Wasp diversity is staggering; the 70 genera and 150 species profiles selected for inclusion in this book are those wasps that regularly visit flowers and are relatively easy to recognize. Holm’s goal is

to provide the natural history and biology of flower-visiting wasps that a keen observer, pollinator enthusiast, biologist, or conservation professional may find in their garden, nearby park, natural area, or nature preserve. (p. 12)

I had been looking forward to this book and was not disappointed. It is both informative and beautiful, with large, high-quality photos that provide notations for key identifying features. This would make a great coffee-table book for the wasp-curious. For

those with an established interest in these under-loved insects, it is a treasure.

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