

Gentlemen and Women of the Wasp World

At this pleasant time of year many of us are sitting out in the garden and enjoying the fruits of our labours. As you sip your beverage your eyes roam over the garden loveliness as it starts to fade gently towards the fall.

Then a swarm of wasps arrive and you are reminded that gardening is a bloody-minded venture that no one in their right mind should take on!

This year I was stung by the gentlemen and ladies of the wasp world- the small paper wasps. They build the small open nests on the sides and peaks of buildings. Their nests are never covered with paper. They rarely sting and do a great job of cleaning up the caterpillars on the plants. They always nest in the eaves of the greenhouse and have never been a problem. This year one nest was too close for comfort and we had a little confrontation.

The colony was extremely active and the queen actually turned around and looked at me. Suddenly she gave a signal and the colony left the nest and took off after me. I ran away waving my arms and hollering unpleasant phases.

Although I had a few stings, none of them hurt more than an hour. Later when I returned to the scene of the crime (why?) the nest was missing completely. Mr. Big told me "No bunch of bugs were going to sting up his woman and get away with it!" What old movie did this line come from?

We have a relationship with bugs that many of you share. He hates them, I love them. He owns a bunch of swatters and chemicals and I have a variety of clear non-lethal bug observing containers. He relishes any opportunity to hone his bug murdering skills and I spend a lot of time rushing around yelling, "Don't kill it!"

However, I draw the line at yellow jackets and hornets. Yes I know they do an important job collecting all the bad guys that eat our plants, but they ruin picnics and take great joy in stinging us. Unlike bees, they can sting us again and again.

However you will not get stung at the second fall meeting of the Mill Bay Garden Club Tuesday October 24th 6:45 pm at the Mill Bay Hall. Everyone (except hornets and yellow jackets) welcome!

Fran Benton

