

Burrowing Bees & Sand Wasps

Burrowing bees are hairy, 1/2-inch-long bees that are usually drab in color, with bands of black and brown or gray. Some species are metallic green or blue. They make individual nests in the ground with 1/4-inch openings. Often, many individuals nest in the same area; the bees tend to fly about six inches above the nest. They are very unlikely to sting.



Burrowing Bee

Burrowing bees are excellent pollinators, with some being specific to native plant species. Several native Illinois plants are in decline apparently due to the lack of habitat for their native bee pollinators.



Cicada Killer

Cicada killers are about 1-1/2 inches long, have reddish transparent wings, and are black with yellow bands. Sand wasps may be reddish or grayish and up to two inches long. Cicada killers and sand wasps build individual nests with 1/4- to 1/2-inch entry holes in the soil.

Males usually patrol the air space above the nests and will zoom around passersby, creating a considerable amount of anxiety. These wasps rarely sting people, although they will sting if stepped on or grabbed.



Sand Wasp

Cicada killers and sand wasps pollinate plants while feeding on pollen and nectar. They capture insects for their larvae to feed upon. Several species feed primarily on tree borers; one species feeds primarily on emerald ash borer and related insects.

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