Innovative Method for Safety of Bees at Hive Entrance from Predatory Wasps (Hymenoptera: Vespidae)

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Members of the insect order Hymenoptera other than sawflies, ants and bees are often referred as wasps. There are more than 2,000 varieties of wasps. These insects are medium sized (10–25 mm) and are readily distinguished by the bands of black and yellow or white on their abdomina. Several wasp species viz Vespa cincta, V tropica, V orientalis, V ducalis, V mandarinia, V velutina, V analis, V flaviceps, V structor, V vulgaris and V germanica have been reported preying on honeybees in different parts of India.

Fig 1: A: View of the device inhibiting wasp entry  B: Device fitted at the hive entrance

On an average 20–25 % of bee colonies are lost due to persistent wasp attacks [ABROL 2006]. The wasp’s attacks usually coincide with the dearth periods when the bee forage sources, as nectar and pollen, are scarce. Of all the Vespa species preying on honeybees, the Vespa mandarinia is the most serious, and attacks en masses. Wasps hover near hive entrance and catch bees returning laden with nectar and pollen loads and/or outgoing foragers. Adult bees, bee brood, honey, pollen etc represent a vast store house of energy for wasps. The hornets would enter the nests, kill the bees, and take their bodies home to feed their young.