

## Newly-discovered Amazon wasp has giant stinger

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Credit: Kari Kaunisto/Biodiversity Unit of the University of Turku

Scientists in the Amazon rainforest have come across a new wasp that could encourage Hollywood to make a horror movie. The newly-discovered insect has a huge stinger on its tail that could inject a powerful and deadly sting into any unfortunate victim. A

scientist said the stinger "looks like a fierce weapon". The stinger delivers a paralyzing venom that debilitates its victims. Once paralysis has set in, the wasp lays eggs inside the victim's body. Researchers from the University of Turku in Finland discovered the wasp. A professor in biodiversity research said: "The stinger of the new parasitoid wasp...is not only long but also very wide, in comparison to the size of the species."

The professor explained that parasitoid insects put larvae inside their host - usually another insect. Once the larvae grow, they eat the insect from the inside out. Researchers believe the unfortunate victim of this new wasp is likely to be a spider, although they need to undertake further research to ascertain exactly which species of spiders might fall prey to the wasp's stinger. The professor explained that: "The giant stinger of the current species is very likely a highly sophisticated tool as well. Unfortunately, we can only guess at its other purposes." He added: "Beautiful and exciting species with strange habits catch people's attention and highlight the importance of maintaining vulnerable ecosystems."

Sources: [dailymail.co.uk](http://dailymail.co.uk) / [techtimes.com](http://techtimes.com) / [gizmodo.co.uk](http://gizmodo.co.uk)

### Writing

Insects are the most interesting and important creatures on the planet. Discuss.

### Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

scientists / rainforest / horror movie / sting / weapon / venom / biodiversity / species / insects / host / spider / research / prey / sophisticated / purposes / ecosystems

### True / False

- a) The article says Hollywood will make a horror movie about a wasp. T / F
- b) The newly-found wasp has a large stinger on the top of its head. T / F
- c) A scientist said the stinger looked like a fierce weapon. T / F
- d) The stinger is not as wide as the stingers on other wasps. T / F
- e) The newly-discovered wasps inject larvae into the bodies of spiders. T / F
- f) Scientists know the types of spiders the wasp stings. T / F
- g) A scientist said the new wasp's stinger is probably very sophisticated. T / F
- h) The scientist said little is known about the stinger's other purposes. T / F

### Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                         |                   |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. <b>come across</b>   | a. get bigger     |
| 2. <b>huge</b>          | b. weakens        |
| 3. <b>deadly</b>        | c. notice         |
| 4. <b>debilitates</b>   | d. enormous       |
| 5. <b>victim</b>        | e. preserving     |
| 6. <b>grow</b>          | f. engage in      |
| 7. <b>undertake</b>     | g. prey           |
| 8. <b>sophisticated</b> | h. discovered(ed) |
| 9. <b>attention</b>     | i. lethal         |
| 10. <b>maintaining</b>  | j. complicated    |

### Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think of wasps?
- b) Have you had any bad experiences with wasps?
- c) What use are wasps in nature?
- d) What are the differences between wasps, bees and hornets?
- e) How interesting are wasps?
- f) What should you do if a wasp stings you?
- g) What other weapons do insects have?
- h) Would you like to look for new insects in the Amazon?

## Phrase Match

- |                             |                                  |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. the Amazon               | a. eggs inside the victim's body |
| 2. inject                   | b. size of the species           |
| 3. a paralyzing venom that  | c. tool                          |
| 4. the wasp lays            | d. attention                     |
| 5. in comparison to the     | e. debilitates its victims       |
| 6. they eat the insect from | f. a powerful and deadly sting   |
| 7. they need to undertake   | g. ecosystems                    |
| 8. a highly sophisticated   | h. further research              |
| 9. catch people's           | i. rainforest                    |
| 10. maintaining vulnerable  | j. the inside out                |

## Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- How can spiders protect themselves against this new wasp?
- What is your favourite insect and why?
- Which do you prefer, spiders or wasps?
- What are the most eye-catching insects you know of?
- How important is the Amazon?
- How important is it to maintain vulnerable ecosystems?
- What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

## Spelling

- oaucregne Hollywood to make a horror movie
- ictejn a powerful and deadly sting
- venom that deslbttaie its victims
- Once rasilypsa has set in
- A professor in sivoiitbydre research
- in ponimrcsoa to the size of the species
- insects put varlea inside their host
- the fonnatutruue victim
- ieartcsna exactly which species
- a highly peiishdocstat tool
- catch people's ienttatno
- maintaining unlelrbaev ecosystems

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. h	2. d	3. i	4. b	5. g
6. a	7. f	8. j	9. c	10. e

## Role Play

### Role A – Wasps

You think wasps are the worst insects. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their insects aren't as bad. Also, tell the others which is the best of these (and why): cockroaches, mosquitoes or bed bugs.

### Role B – Cockroaches

You think cockroaches are the worst insects. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their insects aren't as bad. Also, tell the others which is the best of these (and why): wasps, mosquitoes or bed bugs.

### Role C – Mosquitoes

You think mosquitoes are the worst insects. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their insects aren't as bad. Also, tell the others which is the best of these (and why): cockroaches, wasps or bed bugs.

### Role D – Bed Bugs

You think bed bugs are the worst insects. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their insects aren't as bad. Also, tell the others which is the best of these (and why): cockroaches, mosquitoes or wasps.

## Speaking – Worst

Rank these with your partner. Put the worst bugs at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |              |               |
|--------------|---------------|
| • tarantulas | • cockroaches |
| • centipedes | • wasps       |
| • flies      | • mosquitoes  |
| • bed bugs   | • hornets     |

### Answers – True False

a	F	b	F	c	T	d	F	e	T	f	F	g	T	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.