

mason wasp *Monobia quadridens*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Arthropoda

Class: Insecta

Order: Hymenoptera

Family: Vespidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

This species has a shiny, black body with an ivory mark on each shoulder, a thin ivory band before the waist and an ivory band on the abdomen. The black wings have a metallic black and purple sheen. The male has a light-colored spot on the face, while the female's face is black.

BEHAVIORS

Nests are built in hollow, broken stems, holes in wood or in other cavities. Two generations are raised per year. The female stocks each cell in the nest with an egg and paralyzed moth larvae, including cutworms. She places a mud partition between each cell. Larvae hatch in a couple of days and began the pupation procedures in four to eight days after eating the caterpillars. After about three weeks in the pupal stage, the new adult wasps emerge, although those from the second brood may overwinter in the prepupal stage. Parasites kill many larvae, and other factors, such as disorientation in the cell when attempting to exit, can lead to the death of newly hatched wasps. This species is solitary and not aggressive. It can be found in gardens and other open areas. Adults feed on flower nectar.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

none

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

black soil prairie; dolomite prairie; edge; gravel prairie; hill prairie; sand prairie; shrub prairie

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