

WASP FACT SHEET

Isodontia mexicana Mexican Grass-carrying Wasp



Nest in Plant Stem



Male Visiting Stiff Goldenrod



Virginia Mountain Mint

Scientific Name: *Isodontia mexicana* (Sphecidae)

Common Name: Mexican Grass-carrying Wasp

Range: This wasp's range includes central US and eastern North America from Wyoming southeast to eastern Texas, and east to southern Maine. Populations that occur in the Pacific Northwest are likely a result of recent human-facilitated introduction(s).

Biology: This sphecid wasp nests aboveground in preexisting cavities in wood, plant stems, human-built materials, window tracks, and other similar opportunities. The wasp female provisions the cells from back to front with each cell containing four to fifteen prey. She collects pieces of grass blades: fine short pieces to partition the cells and long coarse pieces projecting from the end of the cavity to cap the completed nest. This wasp produces two generations in the north and three in the south.

Prey: Tree cricket nymphs and adults (family Gryllidae) including the genera *Oecanthus* and *Neoxabea*. Also katydid nymphs and adults (family Tettigoniidae) including the genera *Orchelimum*, *Conocephalus*, *Neoconocephalus*, and *Scudderia*.

Common Native Nectar Plants: Mountain mint (*Pycnanthemum*), boneset (*Eupatorium*), goldenrod (*Solidago*), rattlesnake master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*), flowering spurge (*Euphorbia corollata*), and American spikenard (*Aralia racemosa*).

Activity: Late April to mid-November (south) and late May to mid-October (north).

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