

WASP FACT SHEET

Prionyx parkeri Parker's Thread-waisted Wasp



Female Stinging Grasshopper



Female Transporting Grasshopper



Female Excavating Nest



Female Visiting Smooth Oxeye

Scientific Name: *Prionyx parkeri* (Sphecidae)

Common Name: Parker's Thread-waisted Wasp

Range: Southern Ontario and southwestern British Columbia in Canada and all of the United States except for the northern plains (Idaho east to the Dakotas).

Biology: *Prionyx parkeri* females usually hunt and visit flowers in dry or sandy grassland habitats where their prey grasshoppers occur. This wasp has an atypical nest-provisioning sequence for predatory nest-building wasps in that, prior to excavating a nest burrow and cell, it hunts and secures its prey. The females have long legs that allow them to straddle their prey while dragging or walking it a short distance across the ground to a suitable nesting site (middle photo, left). While the female excavates the nest, she hides the grasshopper nearby, then retrieves and places it in the prepared cell. She lays a single egg on it, then backfills the burrow disguising the nest whereabouts by smoothing out the soil surface and placing small pebbles and debris in the disturbed spot.

Prey: Grasshoppers (family Acrididae) including the genera *Melanopus*, *Trimerotropis*, *Spharagemon*, and *Chrotophaga*.

Common Native Nectar Plants: New Jersey tea (*Ceanothus*), mountain mint (*Pycnanthemum*), butterfly milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*), rattlesnake master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*), goldenrod (*Solidago*), and Indian plantain (*Arnoglossum*).

Activity: June to November (south); July to October (north).