

WASP FACT SHEET

Bembix americana American Sand Wasp



Female Excavating Nest



Female with Syrphid Fly Prey



Visiting Boneset



Male Visiting Tickseed

Scientific Name: *Bembix americana spinolae* (Crabronidae)

Common Name: American Sand Wasp

Range: Two subspecies — *B. a. comata* (west coast states and southern British Columbia) and *B. a. spinolae* (northeastern North America from southern Manitoba east to the Atlantic provinces, south to Indiana and the Mid-Atlantic). Scattered populations occur in Florida, Georgia, and Louisiana. There is also a western *spinolae* population that occurs from British Columbia south to Arizona, east to Oklahoma.

Biology: Females excavate multiple single-celled nests in succession, in bare loose sand. The cell/nest is progressively provisioned with numerous types of flies. After depositing the first fly in the nest, the female lays an egg upon it, then leaving the nest open, she returns periodically to check the larva's food supply. As the larva continues to develop consuming the fly provided, the wasp female brings it more flies as needed.

Behavior: Males emerge prior to females, and while waiting for females to emerge, patrol large nest aggregations. These day-long patrol flights involve many males, making continuous looping passes, while trying to displace others from advantageous vantage points near the nest.

Prey: Flies belonging to many families.

Common Native Nectar Plants: Tickseed (*Coreopsis*), mountain mint (*Pycnanthemum*), boneset (*Eupatorium*), milkweed (*Asclepias*), rattlesnake master (*Eryngium*), and black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia*).

Activity: Emergence beginning in June (south) and early July (north).