

THAT STINGING SENSATION

Never mind lack of statistical evidence, aggressive bees and wasps are on the prowl this year

BY CHRIS TRABER
Staff Writer

It's not your imagination. Bees and wasps have been more annoying in York Region of late.

Some of you may even have found out the hard way.

While no hard statistical evidence is available to confirm an increase in insect bites, experts say wasps often become a problem in late summer and early fall.

It is mating season in late August and early September.

With the production of the next year's generation, the old queen dies and the social structure of the colony breaks down.

A shortage of available food ensues.

It is at this stage wasps most often become a problem around human activities by searching for food.

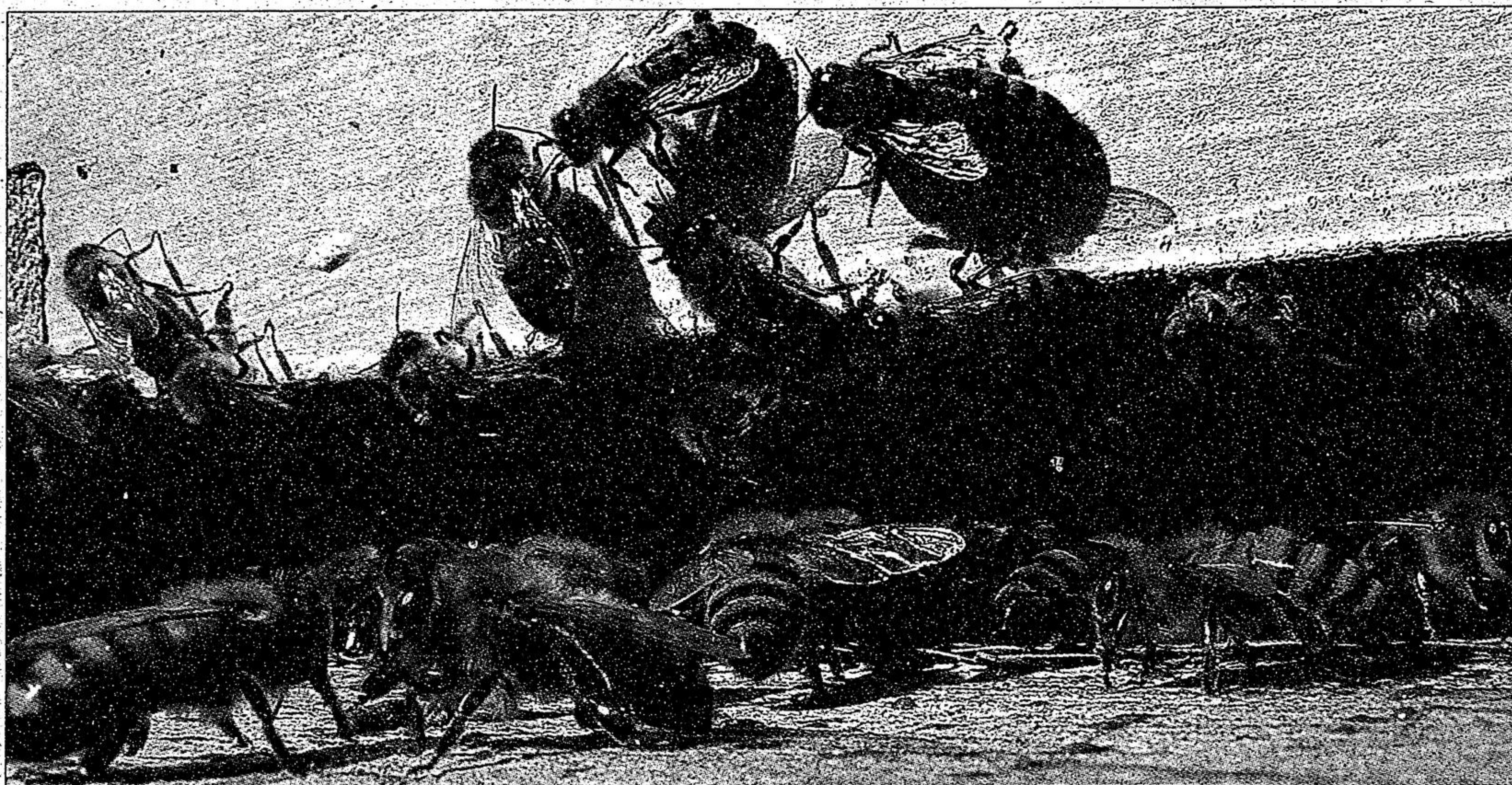
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Bees, too, appear increasingly dopey and aggressive as their pollen supply dwindles and they must resort to patrolling larger territories.

While most winged insects sting only in self defence, the quest for survival will make them a bit more protective of their turf and close proximity to people may be interpreted as a threat.

York Region EMS education and training manager Dave Grant said



It may not be as bad as this front porch scene, but late summer bees and wasps are facing food shortages as mating season arrives and are making life difficult for some people.

bee and wasp bite reports are, at most, anecdotal and represent a low percentage of paramedic calls.

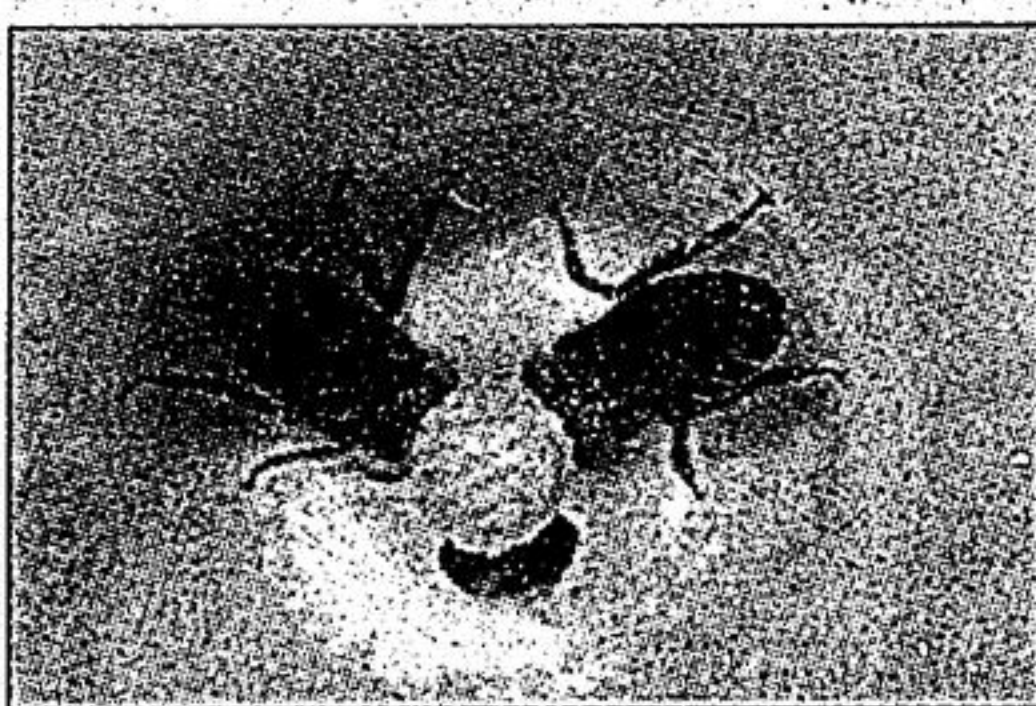
Nonetheless, if someone has allergies to insect venom and develops troubling symptoms, they are best advised to call for help.

"Research shows that about 3 per cent of bee stings produce systemic or allergic reactions," Mr. Grant said.

"What symptoms develop after a bite merits whether EMS should be called. Our crews are experts, and if in doubt, let them decide. We never

like to discourage anyone from calling us."

People with bee or wasp venom allergies are encouraged to always have a dose of epinephrine readily



available.

The chemical, found naturally in the human body, quickly counters negative reaction and is normally administered in a commercially available pen form.

"Systemic reaction comes in varying degrees," he said. "The most severe form is anaphylactic shock. The reaction involves most, if not all, of the skin, cardiac and respiratory functions.

"It's severely life threatening and without treatment you will die."

Relatively rare, less than 1 per

cent of the population is susceptible to anaphylactic shock.

The best defence against agitated bees and wasps is prevention and avoidance, Mr. Grant said.

If one of the critters does sting, try and remove the offending stinger as fast as possible.

"The stinger has a barb with a sac of venom attached and the quicker it's off, the less venom is injected," he said.

"The general instinct is to swipe

See FIRST, page 22.

Le Carré novel makes superb political drama



Anne Brodie

On Movies

THE CONSTANT GARDENER

Starring Ralph Fiennes, Rachel Weisz, Danny Huston
Directed by Fernando Meirelles

A thrilling and superbly made political suspense drama from the director whose last film, *City of God*, exposed corruption and evil in Rio de Janeiro.

In this outing, Fernando Meirelles takes us to Kenya, a land with deeply and irrevocably divid-

ed social classes — the very rich and the very poor.

Though the country is exotic and tantalizing, just over the breathtaking hills are the townships — vast, tin roofed shanty cities crammed with poor people with zero education and less future.

French and English diplomats inhabit gracious mansions in the nicer parts of Northern Kenya, separate and apart — and symbolic of contemporary imperialism.

It's in the nice diplomatic parts we find Justin and Tessa Quayle (Ralph Fiennes and Rachel Weisz) a happily married English couple who are completely different in temperament.

He's a doorman, she's politically radical.

The African and foreign diplomats have reason to fear her.

She and a trusted friend are researching pharmaceutical companies' involvement in Kenya.

They know there is much activ-

ity that appears to be enriching a lot of people.

Tessa sees people in the camps dying mysteriously.

She asks questions and is told the people never existed.

Tessa believes international companies are testing unfinished drugs on Africans.

She says so to a delegation of politicians and businessmen during an official cocktail party.

See PLOT, page 22.

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