

Blackith (1998)

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Dear Dr Gilbert,

Thank you for your letter of 17 August 1998.

I am writing this letter on behalf of Robert who is very unwell with Parkinson's Disease. He dictated to me the following description of events as he remembers them.

"The *Volucella* larvae capture worker wasps in the following way :- the larva positions itself across the entrance to the nest and when a worker wasp walks over it the larva wraps itself round the wasp with the mouth of the larva pressing into and puncturing the wasp's dorsal intersegmental membrane in the region of the 2nd abdominal tergite. I seem to remember that it was only wasps coming out of the nest that were attacked and that the wasp seemed to give up the struggle very quickly.

This is a technique that would probably only succeed on wasps that are comatose at the end of the season. I do not know the instar of the attacking larvae but their length was comparable to that of the worker wasps."

Robert wishes you every success with your book.

Kind regards,

Robert & Ruth.

Ruth Blackith

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