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When summer draws to a close and insects such as bees and wasps reach the end of their life span, it is important to note that already distressed insects often pose a potential hazard to our pets. This is particularly relevant for puppies and playful pets that love to chase flying insects, or who see an insect on the ground as a tasty snack!

Is it serious?...

The significance of an insect sting will depend upon the type of insect and the pet's reactivity to the venom. In addition the location of the sting is also an important factor in determining the severity of a sting, as stings to the back of the throat, mouth and neck area can often inhibit breathing therefore should you suspect a sting has been experienced in this area you must seek veterinary advice immediately.

Things to look out for...

Typical signs that your pet has experienced an insect sting include pain, redness and swelling. It is important to note that even if your pet seems fine it is best to watch him carefully over the next 24 hours as an allergic reaction may develop. Allergic reactions may cause your pet to be disorientated, sick or have trouble moving and breathing, should your pet show any of these signs it is vital to contact your vet!

Bee & Wasp Stings

As bees leave have a barbed sting the stinger will remain embedded in your pet's skin once the sting has occurred and should therefore be removed. To do this, gently scrape the sting out using a blunt object such as a bank card (tweezers are not advised as they may squeeze additional venom out of the stinger). As bee stings are acidic the area should be bathed with mixture of water and bicarbonate of soda. Following this an ice pack should then be applied to the area to provide some pain relief, and as previously mentioned the pet should be monitored for the next 24 hours after the sting to ensure that an allergic reaction has not occurred.

Unlike bees, wasps don't leave the stinger in the skin so there is no need for removal. Wasp stings are alkaline so the area affected should be bathed with vinegar or lemon juice as this will neutralise the sting and reduce pain. As with bee stings an ice pack should be applied to the area following bathing and your pets condition monitored for the next 24 hours.

