

AMERICAN PELECINID WASP (*Pelecinus polyturator*)

Bug of the Month



As the summer months begin to transition to fall, you might catch a glimpse of this menacing wasp flying through the forest. But fear not, the American peleciniid wasp (*Pelecinus polyturator*) is harmless.

The long abdomen of the female is not used to sting, but instead to deposit eggs onto the bodies of June beetle grubs underground. The female wasp probes deep

into the soil until she finds a grub. Once located, she lays one egg and then moves on to another target. When the egg hatches, the wasp larva burrows into the grub and begins to feed. Adult wasps feed on nectar.

Interestingly, some populations of the American peleciniid wasp found north of Mexico are parthenogenic, meaning females

do not require males to reproduce. In the southern parts of their range, males are more common and sexual reproduction is the standard.

By Rachel McLaughlin



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