



## **Fall on Rock – Insect Stings**

New York, Shawangunks

**Jason, an experienced local guide, and his technically competent client decided to climb in the Near Trapps on August 7.** After two multi-pitch warmup climbs, the next objective was the two-pitch Layback. At the top of the first pitch (5.5), Jason built a three-piece anchor at a good-size ledge and brought up his client. From there, the route climbs up easy, blocky terrain before traversing right at 5.4.

After climbing up ten feet, Jason stepped on a rocking block and his client began to notice swarming wasps (or similar stinging insects.) As soon as he began to feel stings, Jason attempted to climb back to the belay. He reached for the anchor but grabbed something unsupportive and fell, landing hard on his feet on the belay ledge. Jason immediately saw that his right distal tibia was exposed through his skin above the sock, and that his right foot was very externally rotated.

Jason yelled to friends at the base to contact 911, request paramedics, and then call the Mohonk Preserve rangers. He immediately initiated a self-rescue. Utilizing the anchor he had built, he rigged his own rappel and backup, and pre-rigged his client's rappel above that. Jason was able to safely rappel with the assistance of a fireman's belay and helpful hands on the ground. His client arrived on the ground, similarly backed up during her rappel, without incident. Mohonk Preserve rangers completed a carry-out to a waiting ambulance.

### **ANALYSIS**

Climbers face many environmental objective hazards, including wildlife. The best way to mitigate such risks is through awareness—there are few practical methods of physical protection. In some cases the community may become aware of wildlife presence, and that information may be accessible online or elsewhere to those who seek it out. This incident was at the start of what became a particularly aggressive wasp and bee season in the Gunks, with at least one very popular climb closed due to their presence. Climbers with known severe allergies should carry an EpiPen or similar emergency treatment to the crag or even on routes. (Source: The Editors.)

## Images



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