

Carpenter ants

Recently I have been encountering many cases of carpenter ants thruout during pest inspections for recent sales. I wanted to give you an outlook and what to look for. The general consensus is that all the heavy rains we had earlier in the year had forced the ants to come out into wood structures and **trees**.

The black carpenter ant, is a native species and the common species in the east. These ants get their common name from their habit of hollowing out galleries in pieces of wood for nesting purposes. This nesting habit can result in structural damage. Carpenter ants are found throughout the United States.

The only external indication of infestation other than the presence of workers and/or swarmers is the appearance of small openings or windows on the surface of the wood. Through these, the workers expel debris which consists of sawdust-like shavings and/or fragments of insulation and insect body parts. The accumulation of such debris below such holes is a good indication of an infestation. Inside the galleries follow the softer spring wood with numerous connections through the harder/dark summer wood. The gallery walls are smooth, with a sand-papered appearance. The active galleries are kept clean of debris. They prefer to attack wood softened by fungus and are often associated with moisture problems.

Most carpenter ants species establish their first nest in decayed wood and later expand or enlarge this into sound wood. Inside, nests are located in wood (preferably softened by fungus rot), in insulation, and/or in wall voids. Workers are a nuisance when out searching for food but are destructive to timbers utilized for nesting activities. Outside, nests are typically located in rotting fence posts, stumps, old firewood, dead portions of standing trees, and under stones or fallen logs. The presence of a carpenter ant nest is sometimes indicated by a rustling sound coming from wall voids or from wood where the colony is located. Otherwise, the emergence of swarmers indoors may be the first indication of an indoor colony.

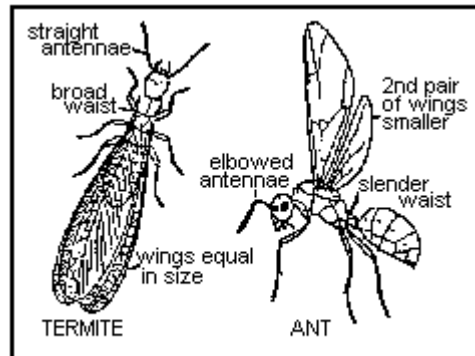
Carpenter ants feed primarily on insects honeydew, plant and fruit juices, insects, and other arthropods. The workers forage for distances of up to 300 feet from the nest. They typically enter buildings around door and window frames, eaves, plumbing and utility lines, and shrub and tree branches in contact with the building. Although some workers are active during the day, most activity is from dusk till dawn, with peak activity between 10 pm and 2 am. The trail between the parent ant satellite nest is usually about 1/4-13/16" wide and is kept clear of vegetation and debris. It usually follows contours but typically will cut across lawns.

The first step is to determine if the ants present are merely foraging inside or if there is a nest inside. The best indication of a nest is the presence of saw dust piles containing insect body parts. Also check around the building's perimeter for foraging trails, especially in the direction of trees and shrubs; easiest to locate between sunset and sunrise when ants are most active. There are many methods to treat carpenter ants depending on the area they are found, it is best that in the event you suspect a problem contact a reputable pest control company. I hope this article will make you aware that wood destroying insects includes more than just termites.

Ant



Carpenter ant



How to tell winged termites from ants

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