

PEST CONTROL BULLETIN NO. 6

CARPENTER ANTS

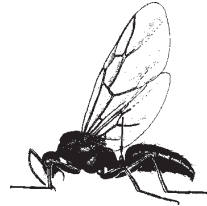
Camponotus spp.



Worker Ant



Actual Size



Flying Stage

GENERAL INFORMATION

Carpenter ants are among our largest ants. The workers may be 7.9 mm (5/16 inch) long. The winged reproductives are as large as some wasps. These ants also have small workers—about 6.4 mm (1/4 inch) in length—in the same colony. Carpenter ants are our only ants that dig nesting sites in wood. The burrows are open, and sawdust-like wood chips and remains of dead insects often fall in small piles below the infested wood. In contrast, termites live in closed burrows. Although ants infesting houses are most active at night, occasionally during the day one may see them going in and out of the nest opening in the wood. Carpenter ants can do extensive structural damage to houses, rustic structures, fences, other wooden installations and in certain parts of California are major nuisance pests. They are very common in areas of new construction formerly occupied by orange groves in southern California.

Their food is other insects, honeydew, and many types of human food. They torment campers and vacationers by getting into food and by attacking people. They may crawl onto clothes, be carried long distances, and later bite the person.

CONTROL OF CARPENTER ANTS

Inside Procedures: Carpenter ants are not always easy to control. Locating the nest is of primary importance. Look for pencil-like shavings; closely examine the window casings; look for channels by holding a hand mirror to the top or bottom of hollow doors; use a flushing agent.

If the nest can be located, drill small holes in the window sills, into wall voids, or above the places where the indicators of a nest are visible and treat these locally. Try to get a general dispersal of material through the galleries. Baits may also be used.

Outside Procedures: Even if the nest has been located inside the building and treated, in wooded areas it is important to treat the outside perimeter to prevent future infestation. Otherwise, spray the window sills and roof shingles. Dust or spray the under area and the outside of the foundation. Spray wood piles, trash piles, and around tree stumps.

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This information is provided to help homeowners with their pest problems. Insecticides may be purchased at nurseries, hardware, farm supply, and pet stores. If additional help is needed, contact with a registered pest control operator is suggested.

No endorsement of trade names or products is intended, nor is criticism implied of similar products not mentioned.

PRECAUTIONS

1. Handle insecticides with care and follow instructions on the label.
2. Do not use around open flame or exposed foods, and always clean food preparation areas after the use of pesticides.
3. Store out of reach of children and pets, preferably in locked cabinets.
4. Never keep pesticides in anything other than the original container.
5. Never reuse the pesticide container to store any other materials.
6. Dispose of all empty containers properly by placing them in the trash can for removal to the local disposal area.



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