

## Appendix 1b

### Carpenter Ants



Black Carpenter Ant  
Clemson University, USDA Cooperative  
Extension Slide Series, Bugwood.org



Red Carpenter Ant  
Edward H. Holsten, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org

#### Identification

Occasionally, swarms of winged carpenter ant reproductives will emerge inside a building structure. Carpenter ant swarms usually occur in the spring and are a sure sign that a colony is nesting somewhere inside the structure.

Carpenter ants range in size from  $\frac{1}{4}$  -  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch (7-15 mm) long with a single node between the abdomen and evenly rounded, spineless thorax. Color variations include black, red, red and black, or brown. Colonies will produce winged reproductives or swarmers. Male reproductives die after the female is mated and begins to form a new colony.

#### General Information

Carpenter ants play an important role as decomposers of decaying trees and in some areas of the country can be damaging to structures. Unlike termites, carpenter ants do not feed on wood; they simply nest there. Wood is damaged as these ants construct smooth "galleries" with rounded edges, excavated in softer parts of wood building elements. Galleries tend to follow the grain of the wood with passages that cross harder wood. Many species of carpenter ants, especially in the southern U.S., do little structural damage; however they can become a nuisance when they nest indoors in insulation or other void areas in walls, doors, etc. The most damaging species are found in the Pacific northwest, upper midwest, and northeastern states.

Water-damaged or other softened wood is especially conducive to nesting, with gallery expansion into adjacent sound wood as the colony grows. Nests may also be constructed in wall voids, insulation, hollow doors, or wood furnishings or fixtures.

Carpenter ant nests are kept clean, with frass, sawdust-like wood shavings, dead ants, and other debris pushed out of the gallery through a crack or slit, creating telltale dump piles that look like sawdust from a distance. Carpenter ants will eat fruit, insects, meat, and sugars including insect honeydew. Carpenter ants typically forage in late afternoon and night, up to 200 yards from the nest, and carry food back to the colony.

## **PROTOCOL FOR TREATING CARPENTER ANTS**

Threshold: 10 ants/room; 2 nest within 25 feet

### **A. When staff observe a small number of ants (e.g. under 10 ants) they must:**

- 1st) Spend two minutes trying to find out where the ants are coming from. Checking around sinks and bathroom fixtures
- 2nd) Kill the ants with a paper towel or similar
- 3rd) Remove any food or liquid the ants were eating
- 4th) Wipe down the area with soapy water or disinfectant to remove pheromone trails
- 5th) Jot down any action(s) they take in the Pest Log

### **B. If the ants come back or there are more than a small number (e.g. under 10 ants):**

- 1st) Spend two minutes trying to find out where the ants are coming from. Foraging ants can sometimes be followed to locate the nest, which may be outside of the structure. A parent nest is usually located outside the structure with satellite nests located inside. Finding the parent nest outside is recommended to prevent satellite nest formation indoors.
- 2nd) Jot down any action(s) they take in the Pest Log
- 3rd) Ask the kitchen staff/custodian to come with vacuum and sealant as soon as he/she is able

### **C. The Kitchen Staff / Custodian will:**

- 1st) Spend two minutes trying to find out where the ants are coming from
- 2nd) Vacuum up the ants and any food debris nearby (vacuum up a tablespoon of corn starch to kill most of the ants in the vacuum bag)
- 3rd) Seal up the crack/hole where the ants were coming from (what can be done in less than 15 minutes)
- 4th) Wipe down the area with soapy water or disinfectant to remove pheromone trails
- 5th) Jot down the above in the Pest Log

### **D. The Maintenance Staff will:**

- 1<sup>st</sup>) Inspect and promptly correct roof, window, pipe or vent leaks; clogged, damaged or improperly aligned gutters; or wood that may be in contact with soil or vegetation.
- 2<sup>nd</sup>) Prune trees and shrubs in contact with the structure.
- 3<sup>rd</sup>) Move firewood piles or other debris away from the structure.
- 4<sup>th</sup>) Decaying or softened wood building elements, such as soft decking and window or door sills, will be repaired or replaced.

### **When to use baits:**

To avoid a proliferation of Carpenter ants and/or unnecessary applications of pesticides, the routine use of ant baits is not permitted without first:

- 1) Educating staff on sanitation, monitoring, and exclusion as the primary means to control the ants.
- 2) Establishing an acceptable pest population density (10 ants).
- 3) Improving sanitation (e.g. cleaning up crumbs and other food sources) and structural remediation (sealing up cracks or holes where the ants are coming from/removing source of ants).
- 4) Following 1, 2, and 3 above.

If the use of a low-impact pesticide baits are deemed necessary, they will be placed in childproof containers, and used only in areas that are out of sight and reach of children/students. Small amounts of low-impact pesticide gels or pastes may also be placed in cracks and crevices or low-impact pesticide dusts may be sprayed into wall voids.

**ADDITIONAL EXCLUSION MEASURES** Grounds staff should prune away any tree limbs or bushes (leaving about 24" of space) that are touching the buildings.