

Carpenter Ants



Carpenter ant queen (Ken Gray
Collection)



Wood damaged by carpenter ants
(R. Werner/IPM Images)



Carpenter ant worker (Ken Gray
Collection)

Typical Location When Observed: Winged adults usually emerge from a nest during spring or early summer and may accumulate at windows and doors.

Importance/Damage: Carpenter ants prefer to nest in decayed, often water-damaged wood. Occasionally, they move into the sound structural wood of a building and can cause serious damage. Winged carpenter ants inside a home indicate a three- to four-year-old infestation. The year-round presence of wingless forms in the home is a sign of infestation. Seasonal presence indicates that the nest is outdoors, and that the ants entered the home in search of food. Additional warning signs of carpenter ant activity are small piles of sawdust in isolated areas, such as crawl spaces or dark closets, and faint rustling noises in walls.

Distinguishing Features: Carpenter ants are large (1/4 to 3/8 inches) and black or reddish black in color. When viewed from the side, the thorax is smooth with no apparent indentations.

Look-Alikes: Termites, other ants especially field ants (*Formica* species)

General Life History and Habits: Carpenter ants nest in decaying wood and feed on a mixture of dead insects and insect products.

Resources: More information is available in Extension Fact Sheets 5.554, *Carpenter Ants*, and 5.518, *Ants in the Home*.

Scientific Name: *Camponotus* species

Order: Hymenoptera (ants, bees, sawflies, wasps)

Family: Formicidae (ants)

Actual Length

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