

- Windows are found above the accumulations of sawdust.



Figure 6 - 9

- Rustling sounds are heard from inside of the walls.
- Wood damage may be found.- The wood damage is characteristic – their galleries are smooth, without mud or frass and cut across the grain of the wood.



Figure 6 - 10

Carpenter Ant activity is generally adjacent to moisture damaged wood or other areas of high moisture. Fig. 6-11 shows some signs of moisture damage on the exterior of a home.



Figure 6 - 11

COLONY SIZE AND LOCATION

A mature colony will usually have from 2,000 to 5,000 individuals. Only one queen is present in the main nest. Satellite colonies may be present in addition to the original or main colony. The main colony contains the founding queen, eggs, young larvae and workers.

Satellite colonies (there may be one or more satellite nests within a structure) contain older larvae, pupae, older workers, winged males and winged females (the Swarms).

The main colony will usually be outside the structure, or it may infrequently be within it. Satellite colonies (one or more), may be found be found indoors or outdoors.

WHERE DO CARPENTER ANTS NEST?

- In sound wood
- In rotten wood
- Under insulation
- In hollow doors
- In toilet paper and paper towel rolls
- In curtain rods
- In tree holes
- In tree stumps
- In firewood
- In railroad ties
- In fence posts
- In hollow porch pillars

FOOD

Carpenter ants do not “eat” wood. They excavate into the wood only to build their nesting galleries.

They are omnivorous, feeding on such things as Aphid honeydew, plant juices, fruit juices, insects and other arthropods.

Inside a home they will feed on meats, sweets, grease, baked goods, crumbs, spilled fruit juices, etc.

HABITS AND DEVELOPMENT

Carpenter ants will forage for food up to 300 feet. They are usually active at night (nocturnal). Their peak activity is between 10:00 PM and 2:00 AM. However, they can be active during the daylight hours as well.

The black carpenter ant usually swarms between March and July. The males die shortly after mating. The fertilized queen, after shedding her wings, will attempt to start a new colony in a wood cavity or under bark. The queen will lay about 15 to 25 eggs. She will take care of the larvae until they mature into small (minor) workers. Eggs hatch in about 24 days, the larval stage lasts about 21 days, the pupal stage requires about 21 days. Thus, the entire developmental time from egg to adult is about 66 days, depending on the temperature in their nest.

Swarmers are not produced for about 3-4 years, at which time the colony contains about 2,000 to 4,000 workers. All workers are unfertilized females. The minor workers generally have the duties of expanding the nest and caring for the queen

and the young. The larger workers forage for food, guard the nest and fight any would-be invaders.

Ants forage by following a chemical or odor trail (the pheromone trail). This trail allows the ants to quickly find sources of food as well as to help them find their way back to the nest. In addition, carpenter ants also orient visually to landmarks in their environment.

LOCATING THE CARPENTER ANT NEST

First, make a thorough inspection of the building and the premises.

Make sure you have correctly identified the ants found.

Locate the nest if possible. This is usually crucial to successfully controlling the ants. Determine if the nest is indoors or outdoors.

The nest is probably indoors if:

- You see ants regularly, in large numbers and particularly in the winter month.
- Sawdust is found inside the building. Dead ants and insect parts will often be seen among the sawdust.
- Carpenter ant “windows” are found. It is through these openings that the ants get rid of their sawdust and other unwanted “trash”. The nest may be located directly about these “windows”.
- Rustling noises are heard within the walls of the building.
- Damaged structural wood is found.
- Moisture problems are present or were present in the past. Inspect for areas of moisture. A moisture meter can be used to locate sources of dampness and perhaps the nest itself. Carpenter ants like to nest in these areas. Look for places where rain water has been leaking into the building. Other damp areas would include areas of condensation, behind bathroom tiles, around bathtubs, showers, sinks, washing machines, dishwashers. Also check refrigerator drip pans etc.
- Swarming occurs within the building.
- Foraging trails are found leading to trees and shrubs. These trails are evidenced by a loss of soil and or vegetation over which the ants are constantly traveling. These trails indicate ant activity between the building and the outdoor areas. Worker ants are either foraging from the home looking for food outdoors and bringing this food back to the colony, or they are bringing older larvae to a satellite indoor nest.

The nest is probably outdoors if:

- Significant ant activity is observed outdoors.
 - Ants are climbing up and down trees.
 - Swarming occurs outdoors.

Outdoors, look for clogged rain gutters, or lack of rain gutters, accumulations of water, improperly placed drain blocks and areas next to the building where the slope of the soil directs water towards the building.