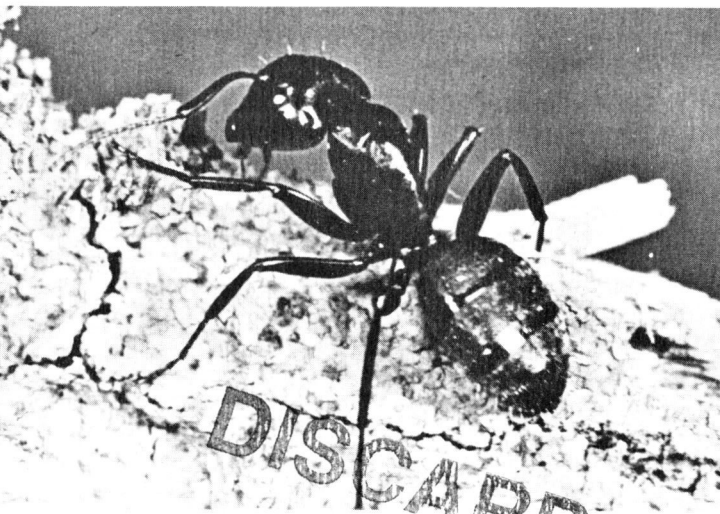
CARPENTER ANT CONTROL



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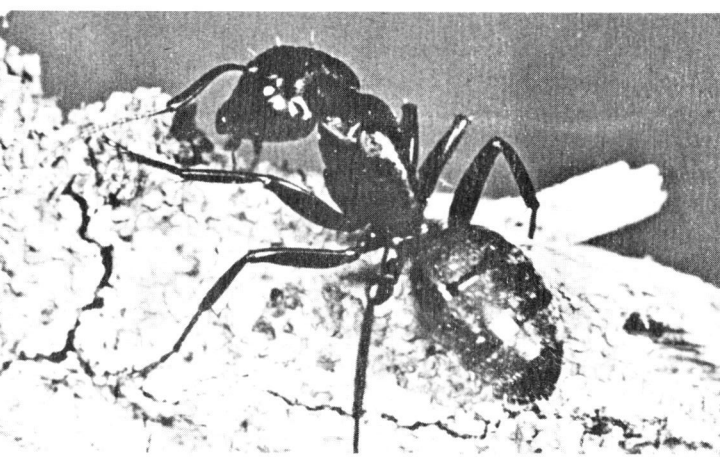

CARPENTER ANT CONTROL

Carpenter ants are serious pests in buildings in Oregon, particularly west of the Cascade Range. They are the most abundant wood-boring insects attacking houses in this region.

Signs of Infestation

- Large black ants running about the house.
- Swarms of large, black, winged ants in or on the house, usually in spring.
- Piles of sawdust-like borings, especially in basements and under porches.
- Slit-like holes in woodwork, especially window and door casings.
- Faint rustling in walls, floors, and woodwork.

How to Recognize Carpenter Ants

Carpenter ants are the large black ants that normally mine in logs, stumps, and hollow trees. They become pests when they move indoors.

Carpenter ants bore in wood to provide living quarters, but do not feed on it. They expel their borings as "sawdust" from their mines. In contrast, termites consume the wood in which they live, hence no "sawdust" marks their presence.

Carpenter ants frequently are confused with the dampwood termite. Both insects live in colonies and mine wood. Since they are controlled in different ways, it is important to distinguish between them.

Carpenter ant workers are wingless, long-legged, wasp-waisted, black or reddish-black ants, about ½-inch long, conspicuous because of their habit of running rapidly about outdoors from early spring until late fall. The reproductive ants resemble workers in shape and color, but have four wings. The front pair of wings are much larger

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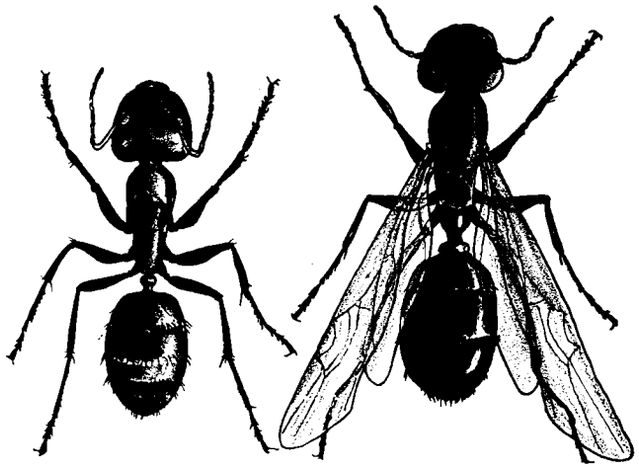
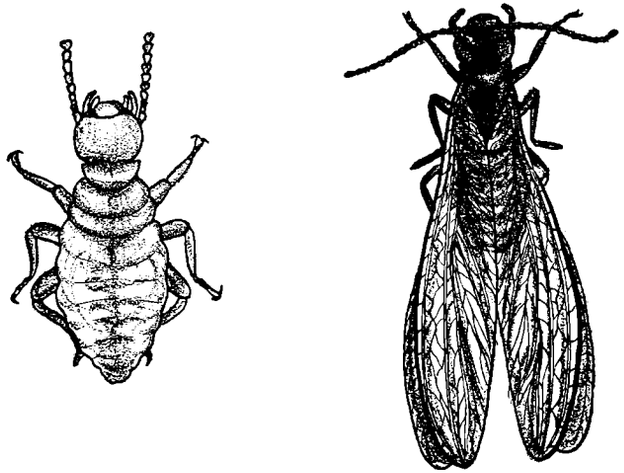


Carpenter ant worker Winged carpenter ant

than the hind ones. Winged ants swarm on warm days in the spring to start new colonies.

Termite workers are yellowish to grayish white, up to ½-inch long, short-legged, rather slow-moving insects that spend their lives hidden from view, unless their mines are broken open. Reproductive termites are brown, thick-waisted, and have very long wings, approximately equal in length. They fly during warm, humid evenings in the fall.



Termite worker Winged termite

What Carpenter Ants Do

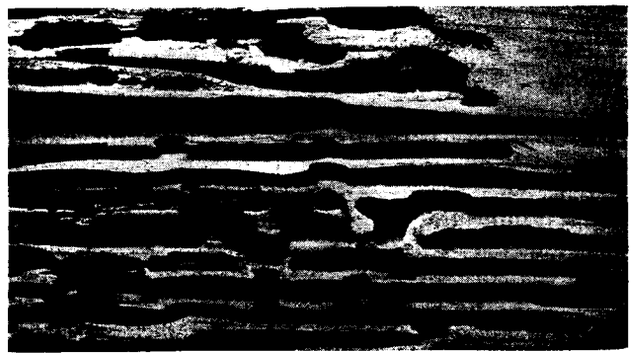
Carpenter ants tunnel in building timbers. Where an infestation is of long standing, damage may require extensive repairs. Usually, only minor repairs are needed. If the infestations are found soon enough, all that may be needed is to get rid of the ants.

New colonies are established either by a lone queen or by migration of an existing colony. The latter is common in houses. Colonies disturbed by the clearing and grading of building sites often migrate. Houses near woods are most likely to become infested.

Usually, carpenter ants enter a house through openings about the foundations. They seem to prefer moist, rotting timbers, but readily mine sound, dry wood any place in a house. Among the commonly mined portions are porch pillars and supporting timbers, sills, girders, joists, studs, and casings. Often the ants establish colonies in masses of fir needles and other refuse that they accumulate within walls, under floors, in attics, and in other undisturbed places.

Carpenter ants are destructive in several other ways. They occasionally damage telephone poles. They damage boxes and other wood products in storage. By mining in the heartwood of living cedar trees, they cause much of the "wormy" lumber that must be discarded. Similarly, they mine and weaken orchard and ornamental trees. They girdle and kill young conifers in forest plantations. By tending aphids for honeydew, they encourage these garden pests.

Besides being destructive, carpenter ants in houses are a nuisance, crawling over things, getting into food, and swarming in the living quarters.



Carpenter ants mine building timbers, causing serious damage if unchecked.

CONTROL

Insecticide	Percent of Actual Chemical: Spray	Percent of Actual Chemical: Dust	Method of Application
Baygon	1%	.....	Paint or spray baseboards, cracks, door frames, and window sills. Dust behind baseboards and in inaccessable areas.
Diazinon	½%	1–2%	
Dichlorvos (Vapona)	½%	.....	*Outdoors*
Malathion (Premium Grade)	3%	4–5%	Sprinkle dust or spray in nest openings, around foundations, and other places where ants are seen.

Aerosols

Some of the above-listed insecticides are available in pressurized spray cans. Normally these containers are limited in effectiveness to insects actually contacted with the aerosol mist. They do not contain quantities of actual insecticide sufficient to control carpenter ants that may appear later.

Remarks

Do not allow children or pets to contact treated surfaces until spray has dried. Do not contaminate food, feed, dishes, utensils, or water supplies.

Do not treat entire wall surfaces or floors. Do not use insecticide dust in places where children or pets may become exposed.

How to Prevent Infestation

A tightly constructed house with concrete foundations, good clearance, and a full basement is least subject to infestation.

- Remove logs, stumps, and waste wood near a house.
- Destroy all known colonies of carpenter ants within 100 yards or so of a house.
- Do not bring carpenter-ant-infested fuel wood into a house.
- Do not build over stumps, logs, or sizeable pieces of wood.

Precautions in Using Insecticides

- Read manufacturer's label carefully.
- Avoid contaminating food.
- Do not use household sprays near an open flame.
- If household sprays get on asphalt tile floors, wipe up immediately.
- Store all insecticides out of reach of children and pets.
- Empty insecticide containers completely. Rinse "empty" containers and use rinse water in spraying foundation and access areas. Wrap empty, rinsed containers in several thicknesses of newspaper and dispose of them in the garbage can.

OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION SERVICE

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