



# Carpenter Ants are Wood Destroying Insects

By Lavonne Dideon, Owner of Aspire Pest Solutions

Did you know that the Carpenter Ant is one of the Wood Destroying Insects? It is also the largest ant in Washington. Known to many as the large black ant they see wondering around in their back yard. Some have mistaken them to be a termite.

Since they are in the Wood Destroying Insect (WDI) group of insects there are some things you should know in protecting your home from them.

These large ants can destroy wood. Most of the time the damage is superficial. However, over time and if ignored it can become a big problem. When ignored, the colonies can increase in size and become destructive to your home.

The queen maintains her colony near a tree, stump, or log not far from the house. While the home is the base for the satellite colony which supports the queen and her colony. The satellite colonies are found in soft wood. This many times is in the frame of the wall of the home, a deck, or where the wood has moisture damage.

The Carpenter Ants then find their way in making a home by chewing the wood to make tunnels. These tunnels become the galleries which house the pupae and protect the workers. The difference between these ants and termites is the termites eat the wood. Carpenter Ants chew and then dump the remains, which we call frass, near the galleries as they make the tunnels. The frass looks a lot like sawdust and will contain parts of dead insects as well.

## What to look for in your home:

The majority of the Carpenter Ants will forage at nighttime. They will collect and then consume dead insects. In springtime, if you happen to find one in your home, the likelihood is you will have a satellite colony in your wall void. They are just waking up from a long hibernation and as the weather warms up the workers are connecting with the parent colony.

When the weather is changing from warm days to cold days, they get a bit confused and want to come back in your home to warm up. In the

summer, when the weather is finally warm you may find piles of frass. This is from when they are busy working in the middle of the night to expand their galleries in your walls.

September comes and we see another change. This is when people often get them confused with termites. They will swarm, these swarms are winged reproductive ants (both male and female), they will swarm inside your home. The distinction that you know they are Carpenter Ants is they have an elbowed antenna.

## Preventing them from getting inside your house:

Following some of these key points will help reduce the risk in your home.

**Vegetation is key:** Cut back trees and bushes 18" away from the house and trees 3-4'.

**Wood:** Keep firewood away from the house.

**Swarming:** In September, watch for these swarms inside your home; away from the cold.

**Sightings:** Be serious about sightings with Carpenter Ants or Reproductive's inside your home.

**Aphids:** They love to feed off the "Honey Dew" from the aphids.

## Treatment:

Give Aspire Pest Solutions a call. We offer 2 treatments for Carpenter Ants. First, we have a 1 or 2 service treatment and inspection of your home. Then we offer a more intense treatment called a "Drill and Treat" where we actually drill inside the wall voids to treat, bigger colonies.

With this falling under a WDI we do these inspections for refinancing of homes, or follow-up after treatment, often a year later. When it comes to selling a home, we can also handle doing your Pest or WDI Inspection. Just give us a call and send us the Inspection Report and we can work with this most of the time.



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