



CASCADE PEST CONTROL

Protecting Your Health and Property

CARPENTER ANTS

Carpenter ants are the most commonly encountered wood destroying insects in the Northwest. They are responsible for damage to thousands of homes each year. The damage can be limited to a fence post or it can be extensive, costing tens of thousands of dollars to repair one home. Therefore, it is important to protect houses and other structures from these pests. But first we must know a little about carpenter ants in order to understand the control strategy.

Identification

Proper insect identification is an important first step to avoid unnecessary treatment and expense. Car-

penter ants have certain distinguishing features (see photo insert) but vary in size and color. Since variations exist between species, rely on your Cascade technician to assist you in proper insect identification.

Basic Biology

Carpenter ants have an ability and

preference to nest in wood. In forests such nesting is beneficial as it helps return dead wood to soil. Unfortunately they view a wood framed home as nothing more than a uniquely arranged woodpile.

A colony may number up to 70,000 ants. They divide their population amongst as many as 12 different nest sites. The ants of the colony communicate with one another regardless as to which nest they typically inhabit. Since these nests can be located as far as 300 feet apart from each other, some colonies are spread over a sizeable portion of a neighborhood!

One of the nests contains an egg-laying queen which continually repopulates the entire colony. This “parent” nest is always located in wood which has a high moisture

Typical carpenter ant damage. (Courtesy of Washington State University Cooperative Extension Agency)

content. As a result it is often found in logs, stumps or in trees.

In contrast, the “satellite” nests do not contain queens and may be located in dry, sound wood. These are typically the nests found infesting homes. One or more nests can be located anywhere within the structural framing including the walls, floors, crawlspaces, attics, as well as within insulation and roofing materials.

Since the “parent” nest is outside, merely “killing a nest” inside seldom solves the problem.

What to Look For In Your Home

Although carpenter ants destroy wood by excavating nests they do not “eat” the wood. The ant “work-

Carpenter ants. Top left - Winged female (future queen); Top right - Winged male; Bottom row - Minor, Median & Major workers. (Courtesy of Washington State University Cooperative Extension Agency)

ers” exit their nests and forage on shrubs and trees for food. They eat other insects and grubs, and “milk” aphids for a sugary liquid know as “honeydew.” Most foraging occurs at night, however, it is their limited daytime activity that is most noticeable to us.

A “red alert” is the presence of ants indoors. Since carpenter ants don’t look for food inside a home, any such indoor activity indicates an infestation within a nearby wall, flooring, or other part of the structure.

However, carpenter ant problems are seldom obvious indoors and often go unnoticed for years. It is best to look for them outside near the house. This is because they have to leave their nest(s) within the structure to forage for food on trees and shrubs. Such outdoor activity may be on the ground, decks and patios, fences which touch the house, tree branches which touch the roof, or near tree trunks in the yard. Occasionally they are even found traveling along wires which run from the roof to a utility pole.

Finding the sawdust-like “frass” produced by the ants is dramatic. However, this is uncommon because they usually deposit the frass within wall voids and other locations where it is hidden from view. Another sign of infestation is the presence of winged “swarmers.” (See photo insert, previous page).

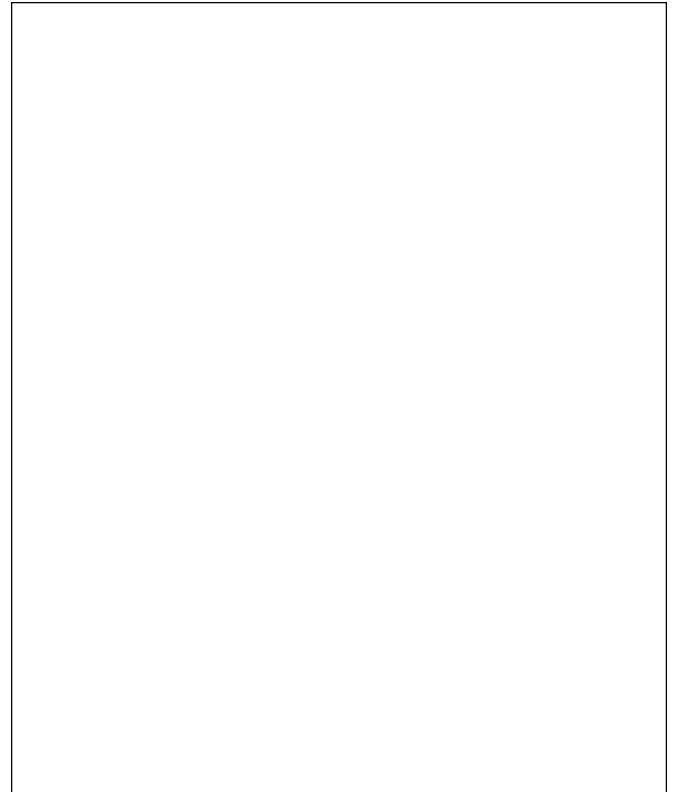
Treatment of Carpenter Ants

By knowing something about their biology, it can be seen that there are two objectives in controlling carpenter ants:

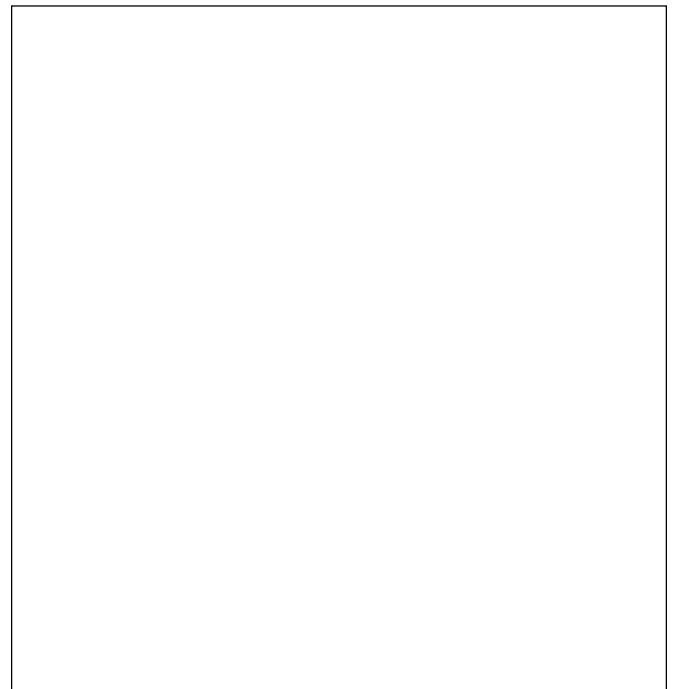
1. Eradicate those ants nesting directly within the structure.
2. Prevent the remaining colony from reinfesting the house once the initial problem is solved.

We must also understand that the chemistry of available pesticides has an enormous impact upon how pest control must be performed. Health and safety concerns have resulted in extensive research to replace the old long-residual insecticides with safer products. The currently registered products are safer indeed, however, their residual effect is now measured in weeks rather than in years.

In order ot attain the two control objectives using the safer, short-term materials, they must be periodically re-applied. The service Cascade provides reflects this ideal and is outlined as follows.



Cascade technician holds back carpeting to reveal carpenter ant damage to floor.



Close-up of floor damaged by carpenter ants.



CASCADE CARPENTER ANT CONTROL

Initial Service

This service concentrates on the house structure and specific carpenter ant nest sites. Service includes treatment of house interior, injection of structural framing where needed (wall, ceiling and floor voids), treatment of attic, substructure crawlspace, exterior perimeter of house, outside grounds including trees and shrubs where ants forage and nearby stumps, logs, etc. where additional ant nests are located.

Periodic "follow-up" Service

- "Contains" any ants which may remain deep within the structure where initial (injection) treatment doesn't reach. Follow-up service creates a barrier ants cannot safely cross to obtain necessary food and water outside.

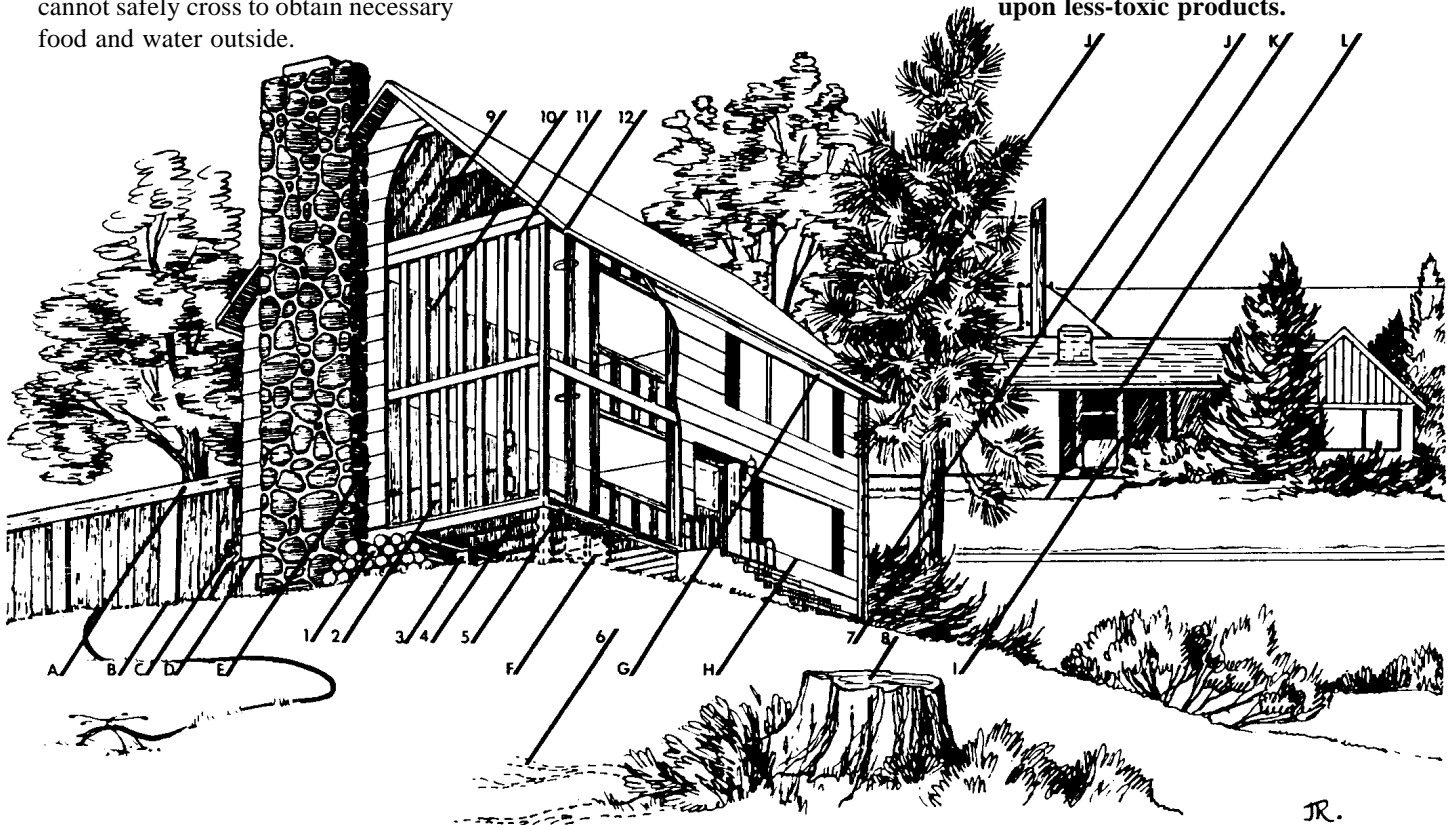
- Periodic follow-up service also protects the structure from reinfestation from "outside" nest sites of the same carpenter ant colony. These ants would otherwise be free to return within a couple of months when the initial chemicals break down.
- With the periodic service is the professional re-inspection of the premises leaving little to "chance."
- Each Cascade technician is trained, experienced and equipped for every procedure used in carpenter ant control.
- The winter service is set aside for inspection and treatment of attics, substructure crawlspaces and between-floor voids.

Please note: There are circumstances under which the initial treatment must be drastically modified in order to provide proper control. Certain types of construction such as log homes and some flat build-up roofs may require "tent-fumigation." See your Cascade technician for details.

A Conscientious Approach

Many of the materials Cascade uses are not only EPA registered for use in residences but also for use in food handling establishments and medical facilities.

Beyond meeting federal and state regulations, **Cascade has received environmental achievement awards for efforts in solving pest problems, while relying upon less-toxic products.**



NESTING SITES

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 - Wood Piles | 7 - Heartwood of live trees |
| 2 - Exterior wall voids | 8 - Stumps |
| 3 - Supports in crawl space | 9 - Under attic insulation |
| 4 - Between insulation and subfloors | 10 - Interior wall voids |
| 5 - Sill plates | 11 - Ceilings |
| 6 - Roots of trees or stumps | 12 - Roofs |

POINTS OF ENTRY

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| A - Fencing next to structure | G - Gutters and downspout |
| B - Wood in contact with soil | H - Window casings |
| C - Garden hoses and faucets | I - Door frames |
| D - Edges of siding | J - Vegetation touching structure |
| E - Edges of fireplace brick | K - Wiring |
| F - Crawlspace vents | L - Sidewalks next to structure |

Carpenter ant nesting sites and points of entry in and around structures.

REFERENCES:

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Providing Professional Service for:

- Carpenter Ants
- Termites
- Carpet Beetles
- Roaches
- Bees & Wasps
- Fleas
- Rats & Mice
- Powder Post Beetles
- Moisture Ants
- Silverfish
- Spiders
- Moths

About Cascade . . .

Established in 1979. Locally owned and operated, Cascade provides effective pest control while being safety, health, and environmentally oriented.

Cascade provides its technicians with continuing education, keeping them current with “state of the art” pest control techniques and newly discovered biological information.

Call us if you have any questions about pests, treatment measures, or Cascade.

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