

## CARPENTER ANTS

Scientific Name: *Camponotus* sp.

Description: For general description, see Argentine ant.

Carpenter ants are among the largest ants found in the United States, ranging from 1/4- to 1/2-inch long. They are usually black. The queens are the largest ants in the colony and the workers in an established colony will be of two sizes. The carpenter ants usually have a thorax that is evenly rounded when seen from the side. They have one node in the petiole and a circle of tiny hairs on the tip of the abdomen.

Biology: The black carpenter ant, *Camponotus pennsylvanicus* (DeGeer), has been most thoroughly studied. This species is common in the central and eastern United States. Other species of *Camponotus* are distributed throughout the United States. Carpenter ants are social insects that usually nest in wood. They commonly excavate galleries or tunnels in rotting or sound trees and will readily infest the wooden portions of structures. They prefer to excavate wood damaged by fungus and are often found in conjunction with moisture problems.

The adult winged female or queen loses her wings soon after mating with the smaller male and selects a nesting site where she secludes herself while raising the first brood of workers. These workers are very small but take over the care of the immatures and the queen after they mature. Future workers are usually larger than those from the first brood because they receive better care. All workers are wingless.

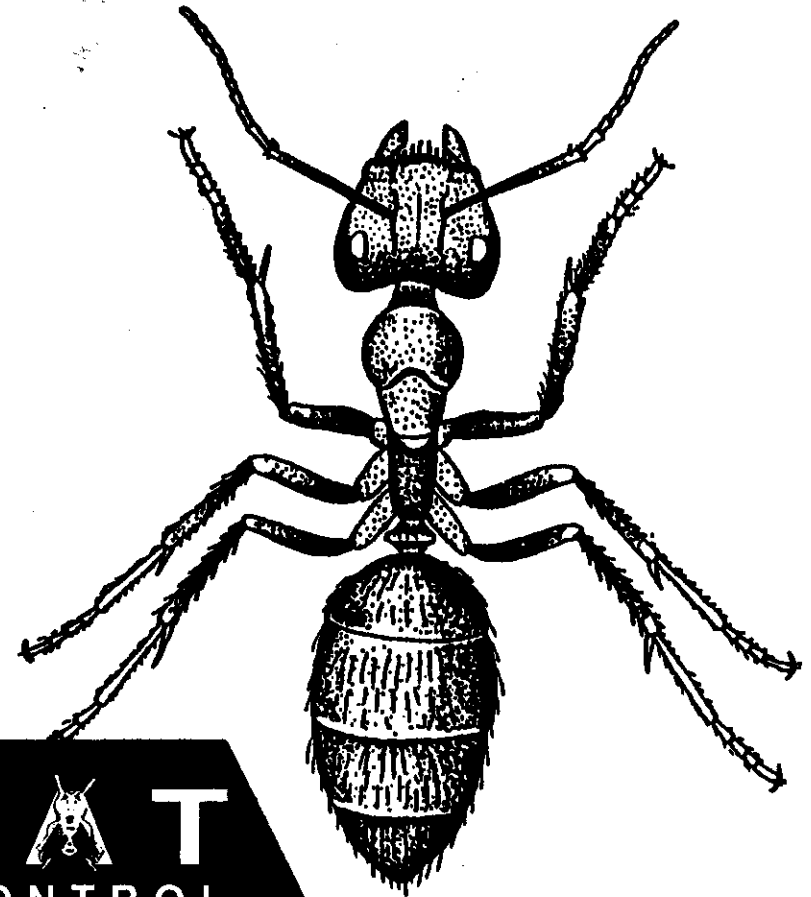
When raised at 90°F black carpenter ants can complete their life cycle in about two months. The eggs hatch in 24 days; the larval and pupal stages last 21 days.

The workers do all nest excavation, foraging for food and care for the young. Carpenter ants feed on sugar solutions from honey dew-producing insects such as aphids, sweets and the juices of insects they capture. They do not eat the wood they excavate from nests.

Carpenter ants may enter homes while foraging for food. However, the appearance of large numbers of winged adults inside a home indicates that the nest exists in the home. The workers will often expel fibrous sawdust from the nest through slit-like openings in the surface of the wood. These piles of sawdust are good signs to look for when trying to locate a colony.

Control: Carpenter ant control can be very difficult. It is important to locate the source of the ants - that is, find the nest. The most complete control is accomplished when the nest itself is treated with a residual spray or dust.

Infestations can be reduced by treating travel routes that the workers follow while foraging. Infestations that originate outdoors can be reduced by the application of barrier treatments of residual insecticides. Bendiocarb, carbaryl, chlorpyrifos, diazinon, fenthion, malathion, propetamphos, propoxur, pyrethrins plus diatoms or silica gel and resmethrin can be used in the control of these insects.



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