



Tips for Managing Carpenter Ants

Description

- This is the largest ant in Maine, growing up to 3/4-inch in length.
- Red or black, but black is most common.
- Can damage wood, especially rotted or moisture-damaged wood.

Prevention

- Store firewood off the ground and away from the house.
- Use ant-proof containers for food storage.
- Block access. Seal cracks in the foundation and block entrances around pipes, vents, wires, etc.
- Repair leaks in the foundation, walls, chimney, roof, and door and window frames.
- Keep rain gutters clear of debris.
- Reduce moisture. Improve drainage and increase ventilation to damp areas around the house.
- Mulch (gravel/stone) around the perimeter of the building.
- Trim trees and shrubs to keep limbs away from the building.
- Replace decayed or moisture-damaged wood.

Management

- Locate nesting sites. Observe ant activity, especially at night. You may need to set out baits (mixture of sugar and milk) and then follow workers to the colony. Look for sawdust-like material around cracks in wood or oval holes about 1/8-inch wide.
- Clean up food spills that attract ants. Wash areas where ants are found with soap and water to disrupt ants' invisible trails.
- Do carpentry to remove ant-infested wood.

Least Risk Pesticides

- Apply a desiccant such as diatomaceous earth (available in retail stores) to the gallery entrance.
- A boric acid based bait pesticide placed along ant runways may also be effective.
- Use extreme caution to minimize hazards when using chemicals.

Further Management Options

Contact the Cooperative Extension Pest Management Office (1-800-287-0279), your county Extension office, or visit <http://www.gotpests.org/> to confirm that you have carpenter ants and for further treatment options.

Photo credits: Clemson University - USDA Cooperative Extension Slide Series, Bugwood.org.



<http://www.maine.gov/agriculture/pi/ipmcouncil>

*Promoting least risk pest control for
a greener environment.*

July 2010