

Best Management Practice

Carpenter Ants

Background:

Carpenter ants are among the largest of the common ants. They are well known to nest in stumps, telephone poles, fallen trees, structural timbers, window sills, inside rigid board foam insulation or behind wall or floor insulation, hollow veneer doors, hot tub covers and other secluded places. . While these ants may destroy the integrity of a wooden structural member, they do not digest the wood but merely hollow it out. Carpenter ants are a very common house pest and can be attracted to sweet foods. They are known to bite people when provoked but they do not sting.

Description:

There are 24 different species of carpenter ants in the United States and Canada. Each of these species has unique differences in appearance, biology and behavior but some will nest in wood and are considered either structural or nuisance pests due to their choice of nesting sites. All carpenter ants are polymorphic with a wide range of body sizes. In the western United States (west of the Great Plains) the most important species of carpenter ant are *Camponotus modoc*, *C. vicinus* and *C. essigi* . In the Eastern United States the most important are *C. pennsylvanicus*, *C. noveboracensis* , *C. ferruginus* and *C. nearcticus* and in the South East *C. floridanus* is an important pest. Well established main or broad colonies will include the queen, brood, winged forms and workers plus additional satellite colonies containing workers, older brood, and often winged males and females before the next mating flights. The number of satellites will vary depending on location and conditions but it is not uncommon to have up to ten satellite colonies. Broad colonies are usually found outside structures where high humidity can be maintained to raise their brood. While satellite colonies may be found both indoors and outdoors, they are more likely to be found indoors because they do not require high moisture levels; they may be found in extremely dry and warm locations including subfloors and attics.



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Note the size differences among these carpenter ants, *Camponotus pennsylvanicus*, feeding on the sweet bait



Management:

The key to Carpenter ant management involves four steps: inspection, assessment, treatment and evaluation.

Inspection: It is critical to inspect the property both inside and out in order to assess the course of action to be taken. Outside the structure, look for carpenter ants in trees and stumps. Carpenter ant broad nests are typically located in trees or stumps that may not be on the owner's property. Inspection timing is important, carpenter ants forage for food in trees during the day in cool weather and at night in hot weather so inspections may need to be made in the evening or late-night. Inspection should look for any wood contacting soil and any wood damaged by water, as well as any trees or landscape plants that contact the structure and any fences that touch the structure. These are all potential access points. Interior inspection should look for water leaks and drainage problems. As carpenter ants tunnel, discarded wood will pile up near the nest entrance.

Assessment: Once the colony location is identified, the next step is to determine the appropriate course of action. This may involve fixing water leaks, removing paths of infiltration and determining treatment methods and materials.



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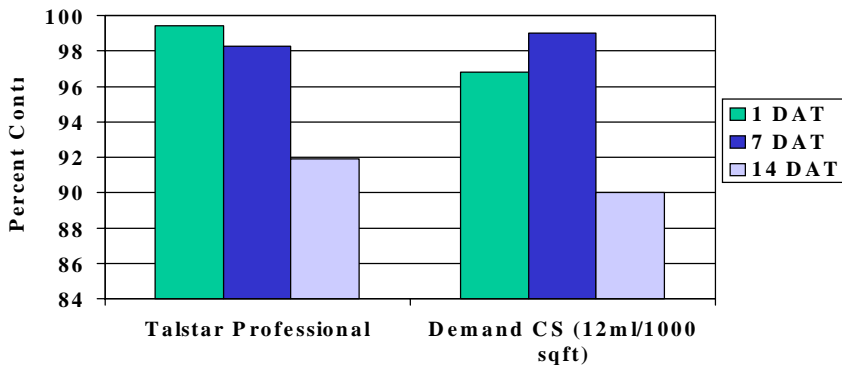
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Treatment: If ants are only found on the exterior during foraging season, the colony is probably located outside of the structure and a perimeter spray or granular treatment may be sufficient to keep ants from establishing satellite colonies in the structure. Apply Talstar® Professional insecticide using a 0.06% suspension (1 oz/gallon) to outside surfaces of buildings up to the eaves making sure to get good coverage at any potential entry points. In addition, treat a band of soil, turf and vegetation 6-10 feet wide around the building with Talstar® Professional insecticide at a rate of 1 oz/1000 sq ft, or Talstar® EZ or Talstar® PL insecticide granule at 2.3 lb/1000 sq ft. If the source of the colony can be located, treat the tree or stump with Talstar® Professional insecticide using a 0.06% suspension (1 oz/gallon) to the area and all associated foliage.

If carpenter ants are already inside the structure the most common practice is a full treatment, which includes placing chemical in wall voids, attic areas and on sill plates and crawl spaces along with a perimeter treatment. Apply Talstar® Professional insecticide using a 0.06% suspension (1 oz/gallon) to accessible areas, use insecticidal dusts in cracks and voids. In addition, treat a band of soil, turf and vegetation 6-10 feet wide around the building with Talstar® Professional insecticide at a rate of 1 oz/1000 sq ft or Talstar® EZ or PL at 2.3 lb/1000 sq ft. In some cases clients may request treatment without a full insecticidal treatment within the house. In this case the use of baits within the structure and a full perimeter treatment often is effective. Sugar or honey based baits are best at attracting and controlling carpenter ants.

Control of Carpenter Ants



Trial Conducted by Dave Nielson OSU 1998

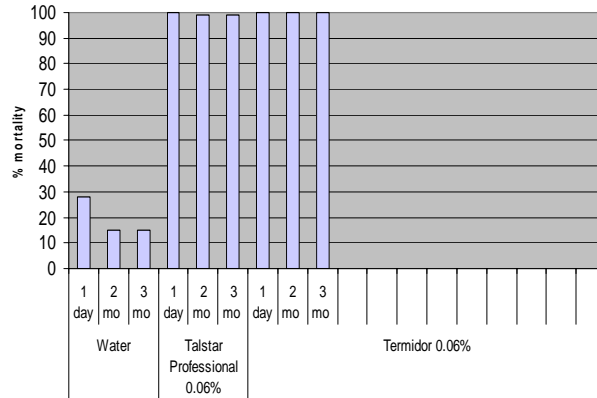


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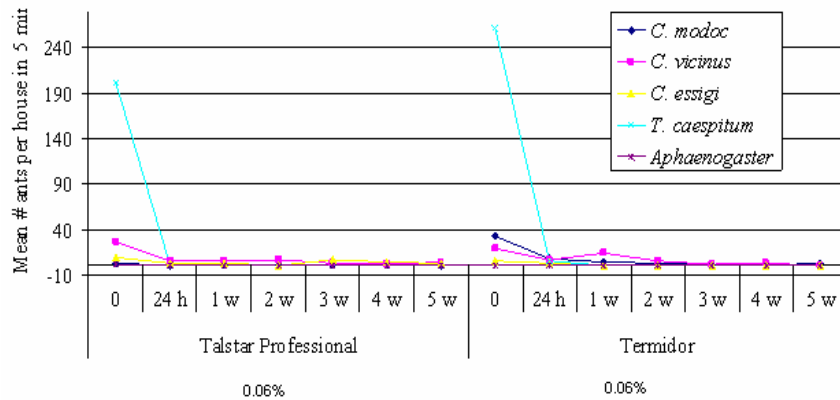
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Carpenter Ant Residual Control on Pine Boards (*Camponotus modoc*)



Pine board sprayed to point of run-off, aged outdoors.
 Worker ants put on treatment for 3 min, then moved to clean chamber with water and honey. Results are mortality after 7 d in clean chamber. (n=20, 4 reps/trt)
 04DLR050, Dr. Laurel Hansen, Spokane, WA

Talstar Professional vs Termidor Around Houses in Washington Laurel Hansen, Spokane Falls Comm. College



03DLR008

Ant counts within 1 m of structure

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