



It's Really Going Places.

Best Management Practices

Carpenter Ants

Background: Carpenter ants are among the largest of the common ants. They nest frequently in wood, hollowing it out and destroying its strength but not eating it. They may also nest in a variety of other places including hollow veneer doors, hot tub covers and other secluded places. They are very common house pests and can be attracted to sweet foods. Carpenter ants are known to bite people when provoked, but they do not sting. Carpenter ants 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.

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 modac*, *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 environmental 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 young brood. Satellite colonies may be found both indoor and outdoors but 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.

Management: The key to carpenter ant management involves four steps: inspection, assessment, treatment, and evaluation. The most effect management is to identify and destroy the colony.

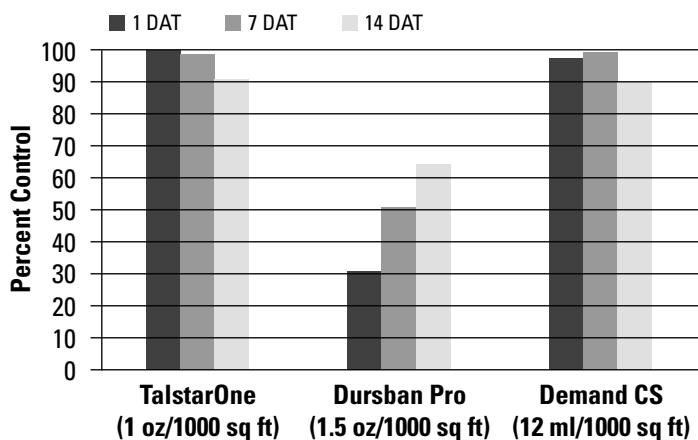
Inspection: It is critical to inspect the property both inside and out in order to assess the course of action to be taken. Outside the structure, look for carpenter ants in trees and stumps. Carpenter ant broad nests are typically located in trees or stumps that may not be on the owner's property. Inspecting timing is important, because 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. Inspectors should look for any wood contact to the soil and any wood damaged by water, 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 items like water leaks from appliances, plumbing leaks, structural leaks, and drainage problems. As carpenter ants tunnel in the wood, they discard the wood shavings which pile up in the tell-tale pile of sawdust.

Assessment: Based on the inspection the PMP then determines the appropriate course of action. This may involve eliminating water leaks, moist wood and removing paths of infiltration and identifying the location of the colony.

Treatment: Based on the pest manager's assessment, a treatment program is developed. 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 TalstarOne™ multi-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 TalstarOne™ multi-insecticide at a rate of 1 oz/1000 sq ft or Talstar® EZ or 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 TalstarOne™ multi-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. This includes placing chemical in wall voids, attic areas and on sill plates and crawl spaces along with a perimeter treatment. Apply TalstarOne™ multi-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 TalstarOne™ multi-insecticide at a rate of 1 oz/1000 sq ft or Talstar® EZ or PL insecticide granule 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 most effective. Sugar or honey based baits are best at attracting carpenter ants and providing effective control.

Control of Carpenter Ants



Trial conducted by Dave Nielson, Ohio State University, 1998

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