

They're Everywhere, They're Everywhere!

"They're everywhere! They're everywhere!" Pest control companies throughout Ohio are quite used to hearing alarmed callers shouting this or similar comments when they find that carpenter ants have invaded their homes. It may be almost literally true. According to the Ohio Pest Control Association a well-developed carpenter ant colony can number as high as 3000 to 5000.

Carpenter ant problems don't develop overnight. When a new colony moves into someone's home it usually takes three years before anyone really notices. Over 90% of all carpenter ant colonies fail to survive past the second year, but after that they have a large number of workers of substantial size to take care of the colony's needs. They commence foraging as soon as the weather permits and can forage over a hundred yards from the nesting area. They are also capable of setting up satellite colonies in or near the home.

One piece of misinformation that needs to be dispelled is that carpenter ants eat wood. Nothing could be further from the truth. The ants, like human carpenters, don't eat the wood. They use it to build their homes by creating galleries following the grain in the wood. The larger the colony, the more wood destroyed. They are also quite versatile. They will live in insulation, in boxes with stacked dishes with paper in between, under roofing materials, even an old pool cover that has been folded and put in a garage can harbor a carpenter ant colony.

When carpenter ants are found living in trees they are often accused of causing the rot in the tree. Actually it is the other way around. The tree is rotting and as a result the carpenter ants are taking advantage of the soft rotting wood to build their homes, which will be moisture and food rich. Old railroad ties, which are often used as landscaping features, inevitably become infested with carpenter and pavement ants, as they generally rot from the inside out.

Firewood is another potential source of carpenter ant infestation. OPCA advises against storing large amounts of wood inside a house or garage for extended periods to avoid the possibility of accidentally importing a destructive ant colony. Bring wood into the house as you need it and when it will be burned within a short time.

For many years the pesticide chlordane was the standard treatment for all wood-destroying insects. After chlordane was restricted to termite control there were no pesticides available that were as effective against carpenter ants. Pest control operators worked very hard to get control for their customers. Now the latest treatment techniques and products have made carpenter ant control much more effective.

The safest and most effective solution to a serious pest problem is the services of an experienced, licensed pest management professional. To locate a qualified pest control operator in your area contact the Ohio Pest Control Association at 937-222-1024, visit the OPCA web site at www.ohiopca.com, or send e-mail to info@ohiopca.com

The Ohio Pest Control Association is the only trade association dedicated solely to the pest control industry in the state of Ohio. With approximately 200 member companies in communities throughout the state, OPCA is The Voice of the Pest Control Industry in Ohio.