

HEALTHY LANDSCAPE  
PROBLEM SOLVER

CARPENTER  
ANTS *indoors*

**CARPENTER ANTS** in Michigan are black, elongated ants 1/4" - 3/4" in size - larger than other ants commonly seen. Carpenter ants nest in wet, decaying wood but do not eat wood (in contrast, termites do eat wood). Common indoor nesting locations are door and window frames, roof rafters, spots near leaky pipes and sewer lines, and interior walls and ceilings.

Out-of-doors, carpenter ants nest in trees, rotting stumps and wood piles. They will enter the house through cracks in their search for sweet and greasy foods.

**READ THE LABEL BEFORE BUYING ANY PESTICIDE.** Re-read the label before using, storing or disposing of the pesticide — the label is the law. Following label instructions will help reduce risks to human health and the environment.



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## **CARPENTER ANT CONTROL OPTIONS**

*There are usually several management options for solving any pest or disease problem. Use the non-pesticide approach whenever possible, saving pesticide use as the last line of defense. If a pest is identified at a damaging level, select a control targeted to the problem.*

*This is called "Integrated Pest Management" or "IPM".*

### **OBSERVATION LEADING TO MECHANICAL CONTROL**

If large, black ants are seen at various times of the year, the nest is probably inside the house. To make this determination, follow ants crawling on the floor or walls to identify the entry point and area for targeting control measures. It is rarely necessary to apply insecticide to (or through) the entire structure.

If the ants have nested inside, destroy the nest and remove and replace the decayed wood. Fix leaks and sources of dampness. If ants are simply entering the house from outside, seal cracks and entry holes. Out-of-doors, store firewood off the ground and prune trees away from the structure.

Ant repellents made from mint, citrus, and other natural products may be useful barriers. Apply outside the house or across pathways where ants are seen. Do not expect repellents to kill the ants.

### **BORIC ACID BAITS WHICH CONTROL THE ANT COLONY**

Sweet baits (including boric acid baits) attract carpenter ants. Worker ants eat the bait and then spread it to other members of the colony. Read the label and follow instructions

#### **Sources of information:**

Greg Patchan, Horticulture Agent, MSU Extension - Oakland County.

Tom L.Ellis and Joy N. Landis, *What's Bugging You?*, MSU Extension

Olkowski, et. al., *Common-Sense Pest Control*, Taunton Press