

## Common Household Pests

Every home has or will eventually have “pests”. Here are a few of the more common insects in our area. For more information you can try [Pestworld.org](http://Pestworld.org)



### Carpenter Ants

*Camponotus species*

COLOR:	Varies depending on species, from red to black or a combination. The two most common species are black.
LEGS:	6
SHAPE:	Segmented; oval
SIZE:	5/8"
ANTENNAE:	True
REGION:	Found throughout U.S.; most common in the Northern half of the country

Carpenter ants get their name because they excavate wood in order to build their nests. Their excavation results in smooth tunnels inside the wood. Carpenter ants range in size from one-quarter inch for a worker ant to up to three-quarters inch for a queen.

#### Habits

All species mainly attack wood that is or has been wet and damaged by mold. Even though these ants first invade wet, decayed wood, they may soon begin building paths through dry, undamaged wood. They usually come into buildings through cracks around doors, windows, or through holes for wires. They will also crawl along overhead wires, shrubs, or tree limbs that touch the building far above the ground.

#### Habitat

Carpenter ants build their nests outdoors in various wood sources, including tree stumps, firewood or landscaping. They need a constant water source to survive. They will enter homes through wet, damaged wood.

#### Threats

Carpenter ants damage wood through their nest building. If they gain entry to a structure, they pose a property threat.

#### Prevention:

Because carpenter ants require a water source, eliminate sources of moisture or standing water. Keep tree branches and other plants cut back from the house. Sometimes pests use these branches to get into your home. Make sure that there are no cracks or little openings around the bottom of your house. Sometimes pests use these to get into your home. Make sure that firewood and building materials are not stored next to your home. Pests like to build nests in stacks of wood.



## Carpenter Bees

*Xylocopa species*

<b>COLOR:</b>	Blue-black, green or purple metallic sheen on abdomen
<b>LEGS:</b>	6
<b>SHAPE:</b>	Oval; bee shape
<b>SIZE:</b>	1
<b>ANTENNAE:</b>	True
<b>REGION:</b>	Found throughout U.S.

Carpenter bees look like typical bumblebees but often lack yellow stripes. They are solitary bees.

### Habits

Unlike bumble bees, carpenter bees are solitary insects. Female carpenter bees will chew a tunnel into a piece of wood to build a nest gallery. The bits of wood she chews and deposits outside the nest are called frass. The male carpenter bee guards the outside of the nest. He does not have a stinger, but his constant buzzing causes concern for some.

### Habitat

Carpenter bees bore through soft woods to lay eggs and protect their larvae as they develop.

### Threats

Carpenter bees do not pose a public health threat, but they can damage wood through their nest building.

### Prevention:

Carpenter bees prefer bare wood, so painting and staining wood can sometimes deter them. However, they will sometimes attack stained or painted wood, so contact a pest control professional for assistance.



## Subterranean Termites

*Family Rhinotermitidae*

<b>COLOR:</b>	Creamy brown
<b>LEGS:</b>	6
<b>SHAPE:</b>	Long, narrow, oval
<b>SIZE:</b>	1/8
<b>ANTENNAE:</b>	True
<b>REGION:</b>	Found throughout U.S.

Subterranean termites live in underground colonies or in moist secluded areas aboveground that can contain up to 2 million members. They build distinctive "mud tubes" to gain access to food sources and to protect themselves from open air. Termite colonies are organized into castes depending on tasks -- workers, soldiers and reproductives. The characteristics of a subterranean termite are dependent on the termite's role in the colony. Cream-colored Worker subterranean termites are 1/8 to 3/8's of an inch in length. Soldier subterranean termites are of a similar body length, but are distinguished by their powerful mandibles. Soldier termites have cream-colored bodies and brown heads. Reproductive subterranean termites are approximately one inch long.

### Habits

Subterranean termites live underground and build tunnels, referred to as mud tubes, to reach food sources. Like other termite species, they feed on products containing cellulose. Subterranean termites swarm in the spring -- groups of reproductive termites go off to start new colonies.

### Habitat

Subterranean termites need contact with the soil to survive and live underground. They can build tunnels through cracks in concrete.

### Threats

Subterranean termites are by far the most destructive species. They can collapse a building entirely, meaning possible financial ruin for a homeowner. The hard, saw-toothed jaws of termites work like shears and are able to bite off extremely small fragments of wood, one piece at a time.

### Prevention:

Avoid water accumulation near your home's foundation. Divert water away with properly functioning downspouts, gutters and splash blocks. Reduce humidity in crawl spaces with proper ventilation. Never bury wood scraps or waste lumber in the yard. Most importantly, eliminate wood contact with the soil. Maintain a one-inch gap between the soil and wood portions of the building.



<b>COLOR:</b>	Reddish brown to black
<b>LEGS:</b>	6
<b>SHAPE:</b>	Narrow oval
<b>SIZE:</b>	1/8 to 1/4"
<b>ANTENNAE:</b>	True
<b>REGION:</b>	Found throughout U.S.

## **Powder post Beetles**

*Lyctus brunneus*

Powder post beetles lay their eggs in cracks of wood and the larvae tunnel into the surface, filling it with a very fine powder-like dust. Powder post beetles have long, narrow, flat bodies that allow them to easily attack wood surfaces. These beetles are reddish-brown in color.

### **Habits**

Adult powder post beetles are very active at night, enjoy flying and are attracted to the light.

### **Habitat**

Powder post beetles often attack hardwoods, and can be found in hardwood floors, timbers and crates, antiques and other objects made of hardwood materials.

### **Threats**

Some researchers believe that powder post beetles are second only to termites in the United States in their destructiveness to wood and wood products.

### **Prevention:**

Powder post beetles can be prevented through vigilant inspection of wood sources in the home.