

Wood-Destroying Insects

Termite and ant control in the home

Insect Control in the Home

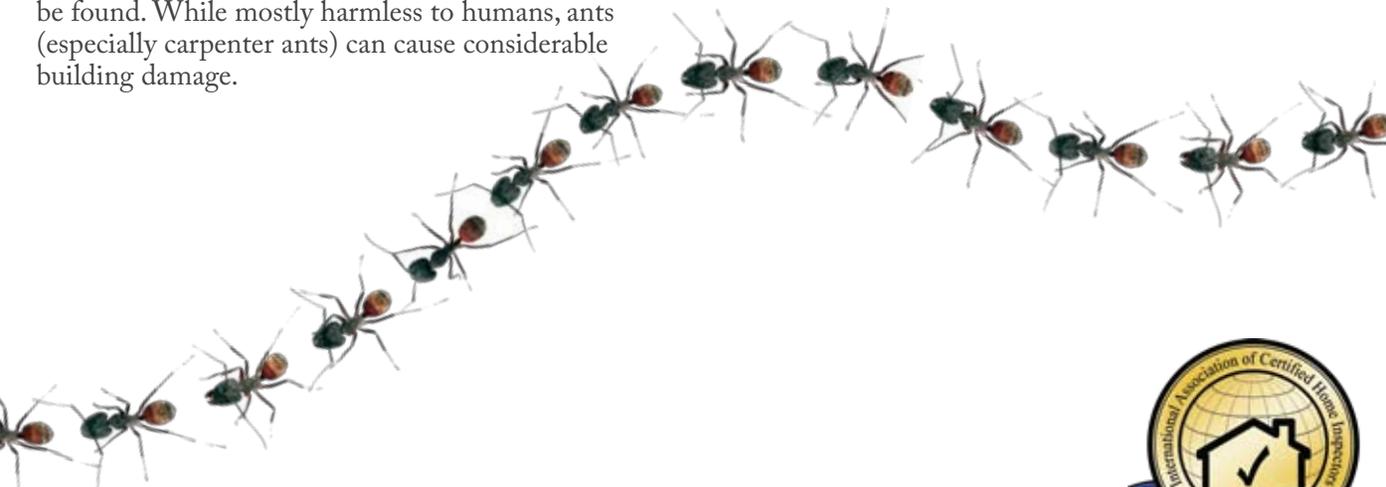
Wood-destroying insects and other organisms can cause serious problems in the wooden structural components of a house, and may go unnoticed by the homeowner until damage is extensive. Control measures include reducing the potential infestation, preventing insect entry, and applying chemicals for remedial treatment.

Termites

Subterranean termites are the most damaging insects of wood. Their presence is hard to notice, and damage usually is found before the termites are seen. Homeowners should take measures to prevent infestations, which may require hiring a pest-control service.

Ants

Ants are among the most prevalent pests in households, restaurants, hospitals, offices, warehouses, and virtually all buildings where food and water can be found. While mostly harmless to humans, ants (especially carpenter ants) can cause considerable building damage.



Certified InterNACHI Inspector

- I am a member in good standing of the International Association of Certified Home Inspectors (InterNACHI).
- I am Infrared-Certified®
- I adhere to the InterNACHI Standards of Practice.
- I abide by the InterNACHI Code of Ethics.
- I stay up to date with the latest inspection techniques in the industry through Continuing Education.

Regular inspections of your house are an important part of home maintenance. Inspecting for wood-destroying insects can alert you to possible infestations in the wooden structural components of your home—a serious problem that often goes undetected for long periods of time. As a qualified inspector, I will give you peace of mind about the safety of your investment.

Contact me today to schedule your inspection.



www.NACHI.org



Distinguishing Ants from Termites

Winged ants are often mistaken for winged termites, which also leave their nests to mate. These insects can be distinguished from one another by three main characteristics:

- The ant's body is constricted, giving it the appearance of having a thin waist, while the termite's body is not constricted.
- The ant's hind wings are smaller than its front wings, while the termite's front and hind wings are about the same size. Wings might not always be present, however, as both species eventually shed them.
- Winged female and worker ants have elbowed antennae, while the termite's antennae are not elbowed.

Termites and ants both construct nests in moist wood, but ant nests are typically smoother and lack mud structures commonly found in termite nests. Also, termites actually subsist on wood, so the structural damage they leave in their wake is generally more severe than that caused by ants, which merely tunnel through wood.



Signs of Termite Infestation

Generally, the first sign of infestation is the presence of swarming termites on the window or near indoor light. If they are found inside the house, it almost always means that they have infested. Other signs that may be found are termite wings on window sills or in cobwebs, and shelter tubes, which are tunnels constructed by the termites from soil or wood and debris. Usually, wood damage is not found at first, but when it is found, it definitely reveals a termite infestation. Anywhere wood touches soil is a possible entry into a home for termites. Examine wood which sounds dull or hollow when struck by a screwdriver or hammer. Inspect suspected areas with a sharp, pointed tool, such as an ice pick, to find termite galleries or their damage.

If you see the following signs in your house, you might have termites:

- sawdust-like droppings;
- dirt or mud-like tubes or trails on the structure;
- damaged wood members (such as window sills); and
- swarming winged insects within the structure, especially in the spring or fall.



Signs of Ant Infestation

The following clues are evidence that a building is host to an ant infestation:

- long trails of ants, perhaps numbering in the hundreds or thousands. Ants assemble in long trails along structural elements, such as wires and pipes, and frequently use them to enter and travel within a structure to their destination;
- a few straggler ants. These are scouts in search of food and nesting sites;
- holes or cracks in walls or the foundation, especially where pipes enter the building, and around windows and doors. These can provide entry points for ants and other insects. Kitchens and other food storage and preparation areas are particular problem areas;
- frass deposits. Frass is the fine sawdust produced after galleries are carved out of the wood;
- a distinctive rustling sound similar to the crinkling of cellophane. Ants are small, but nests are large enough to produce perceptible noise; and
- outside, inspect for nests in mulch and vegetation next to the foundation. Check under potted plants, patio blocks, stepping stones, in piles of rocks, lumber and firewood.

