

Ant Invasion Alert

With an estimated **10 million billion** (yes, million billion!) ants in the world, it's no wonder that nearly every home has problems with these pests. Ants are a staggeringly prolific pest. In recent years they have become the **#1** pest problem around the country, partly because more invasive ant species have expanded their territories. It's not just that ant queens keep laying more eggs every day, but the colonies themselves are easily able to start whole new colonies.

Swarming is one way new ant colonies get started. Every mature colony develops fully reproductive,



the new queens eventually become simply egg-laying machines, cared for and fed by the other ants.

Another common way some ants start new colonies is by **budding**. If a colony becomes too crowded, or some other adverse condition arises, part of the colony simply leaves and starts a

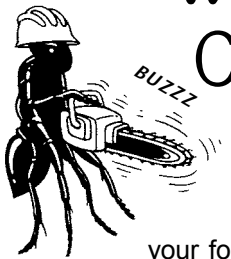
winged males and females. These wait for ideal weather conditions, when many hundreds exit a colony all at once, mate, and look for good spots to start new colonies. They then lose their wings, and

new colony. The result is two or more complete new colonies with queens and workers, where only one colony previously existed.

People also wonder how large ant colonies can suddenly appear in their home, sometimes overnight! Some kinds of ants have quite mobile colonies, and the entire colony—eggs, larvae, pupae, workers, and queens—picks up and moves to a new site whenever it suits them.

We are ant experts. We understand these prolific, constantly invading pests, and how to get rid of them.

Watch for Carpenter Ants



Carpenter ants are a double whammy. Not only are they a serious **nuisance** as they crawl about, getting into your food and leaving piles of sawdust and dead ants, but they also **damage wood** as they tunnel into it to create nesting areas. Their activities can result in a weakened structure and a leaky roof.

Sometime during the spring, carpenter ant colonies in our area send out winged "**swarmers**" in large numbers, and people often see these. Swarmers, unlike the more numerous worker ants, are the reproductive ants that attempt to establish new colonies. You may find these ants around window sills indoors because they instinctively fly toward light after emerging from an

indoor nest.

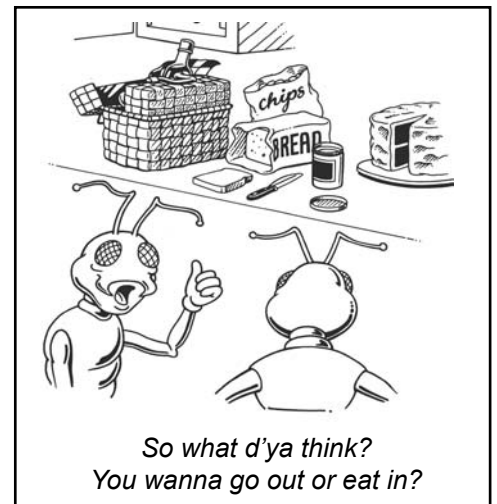
Other signs of a carpenter ant infestation include "**dump piles**" of fibrous sawdust, dead ants, and other debris that they push out through tiny slit-like openings. Sometimes you can also hear the faint rustling **noises** of their clicking jaws, called mandibles.

Worker ants crawling about are another sign of a problem. These ants are most active at night, although some can be seen during the day. Their nests may be either in or outside the home, or both. (A carpenter ant colony may have several satellite nests; some indoors, and others outdoors.) It is important to locate and treat each of these nests.

We are the area experts at carpenter ant control. Call us if you see any of the above signs of these troublesome and damaging pests!

Pest Prevention Tip of the Month

Now is a good time to check to make sure plants have not grown over any crawl space or attic vents. Air must be able to flow freely through these areas to help decrease moisture levels. Ivy and shrubs need to be trimmed well away from these openings.



So what d'ya think?
You wanna go out or eat in?

Young Children Most at Risk



About half of all cases of human exposure to pesticides occur in children less than six years old, and most of these cases are related to improper storage of pesticides by homeowners. Because of this risk, it's a good idea to limit the number of pesticides you keep in your home and garage.

Although the main benefit of our regular pest management services is that we take care of pest problems for you, another important benefit is that you'll have fewer pesticide containers to store. This helps greatly reduce or eliminate the problem of safely storing and disposing of pesticides.

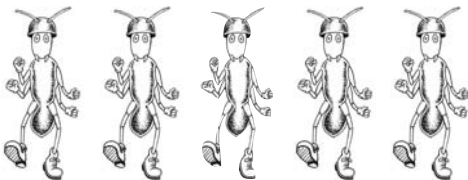
Ants vs Ants!



Argentine ants live in peace and harmony with neighboring colonies of Argentine ants. The result is higher numbers of ant colonies, and lots of ants! The ants become so numerous that they cause serious damage to wildlife and crops, and they invade countless homes.

Argentine ants recognize ants from neighboring, friendly colonies, by their body odors, or "recognition chemicals". Scientists are just beginning to crack the code of these key scents. By creating a synthetic version of the ant scent, and then changing the ingredients slightly, scientists were recently able to create slightly altered scents. When these modified scents were sprayed on some ants, other ants in the same colony perceived them as rival ants. One whiff of the foreign scent, and they suddenly began tearing to shreds their now strange-smelling nest mates, ripping off their antennae, legs, and heads, and battling them to the death.

It is hoped that one day continuing research into these scents may lead to a potent new type of ant control.



Your Questions Answered

Q. What is the proper way to remove a tick?



A. It's important to remove ticks as soon as possible. This needs to be done properly so that no tick mouth parts break off and remain in your skin.

The best way is to use a blunt pair of forceps, grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible, and remove it with a steady pull. Do not crush or squeeze the tick as you pull because it may regurgitate, increasing the chance of infection. After you have removed the tick, disinfect your skin with alcohol and wash your hands with soap and water.

Scientists tested some popular folk remedies to remove American dog ticks from sheep. They tried covering ticks with petroleum jelly, nail polish, and rubbing alcohol, and touching ticks with a match that had just been extinguished. **None** of these methods worked very well.

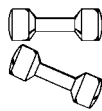
They also tried different kinds of pulls with tweezers—a twist, an upward pull, and a pull parallel to the skin. **All** of these tweezer methods were successful.

Landscape Mulch & Termites



It has become well known that plant-based mulches used in landscaping can actually increase termite activity. A recent report in the April issue of the *Journal of Economic Entomology* showed that the type of mulch makes an important difference. Young Formosan termite colonies feeding on pine straw (pine needles) produced more termites than all other mulches tested over a one-year period. Also, the survival rate was greater for young termite colonies feeding on mulches of pine straw, eucalyptus, bald cypress, and water oak, than mulches of cedar wood, pine bark, and melaleuca.

Work-outs for Lizards



A push-up may be just an exercise for us, but for a lizard, it's a way to express itself. Recent research has shown that sagebrush lizards (a close relative of Western fence lizards) in the Western United States communicate with each other by variations of their bobbing up and down. Their communications using push-ups revolves around three important lizard topics: wooing the opposite sex, fighting or warning other lizards, and just conveying that they've found a really great rock. For instance, a male with romantic intentions might do five to nine push-ups in a hurry, while not showing its scary blue belly, to communicate its intentions.

Interestingly, there are regional differences in these displays, depending on where you are in the West. For instance, in what some might call typical California manner, lizards do more exaggerated push-ups (they arch their back more) than the same lizard species in Oregon or Utah.

