

## The Carpenters



If you are old enough, you will probably remember the singing duo called “The Carpenters”. One of their hit songs was “We’ve Only Just Begun”. This article, however is not about people, it’s about carpenter ants. It is said that if you live in Oregon, your house has carpenter ants, has had carpenter ants, or will have carpenter ants in the future. So, they’ve “only just begun” to live on your property.

I can attest to having had an infestation several times over the years we have lived in Oregon. Carpenter ants can be very devastating to the wood of your house. They don’t eat it, mind you, but they do tunnel through your beams and rafters and use these galleries to make their nests. They can even make their nests in boxes of old clothes, Christmas ornaments and other items stored in boxes in your garage.

Carpenter ants are fairly easy to recognize. They are normally black with a smooth rounded top to their thorax and are about 1/4 inch or so long.

The worker ants, looking for food, begin activity in early spring and often an individual or two can be found in your house during that time. Don’t panic! If you see only one or two it probably means only a scouting party foraging for food to take back to the nest. A swarm of winged ants, or many non-winged individuals in the house could indicate a problem. What to do if you do have an infestation? If you can locate the nest you can use some over the counter sprays or poisons to attack the nest directly. Most of the time, however, the nest is hidden away in the structure, and you need to use a slow-acting persistent insecticide that the foragers can take back to the nest and share with the other ants. Look at the recent edition of the PNW Insect Control Handbook to see other information on control measures.

Hopefully, you won’t have any trouble with the carpenters this year. The human Carpenters was a nice singing group!

