



# NOTICE THE SIGNS

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DIFFERENCES BETWEEN  
A CARPENTER ANT AND  
TERMITE INFESTATION

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Prepared by:



Wood-destroying insects can cause significant damage to your home or business, so acting quickly at the first signs of an infestation is paramount. Carpenter ants and termites are two of the most common wood-destroying insects in New England, so read through this ebook to learn the differences between these pests and how to protect your home from damage.

## Why You Might Mix Up Carpenter Ants and Termites

When we think of insects that damage wooden structures, termites immediately come to mind, but it is important to remember that there are other species that can cause damage to your home. Mixing up carpenter ants and termites is fairly commonplace because these two insects have a lot in common, including:



### 1. Both Burrow in Wood

This is the biggest reason most people mix up carpenter ants and termites. Both insects bore into wooden structures. A common misconception is that both termites and carpenter ants eat wood, but it is only termites who consume the wood, while carpenter ants are excavating tunnels and building nests to live in.



### 2. Both Swarm

One of the easiest signs of a carpenter ant or termite problem is swarming — when the insects are at the stage in their life cycle when they have wings and fly around establishing colonies. Swarming is temporary, usually occurring during the spring, and it typically indicates a mature colony that is spreading out.



### 3. Both Are Active Year Round

Though carpenter ants hibernate if they are nesting outdoors or in the cold, they remain active through the cold months if they are living and foraging in warm spaces (*like your home!*). Termites don't hibernate regardless of where they nest, so it is not uncommon to see signs of infestations all year round.



### 4. Both Are Hard to Spot

The biggest concern about wood-destroying insects is that it is difficult to spot an infestation. Early detection is key so constant vigilance will help you protect your home from damage. Carpenter ants and termites leave different clues to their presence, so keep reading to learn how to tell them apart.



# How to Tell the Difference

## APPEARANCE

Because termites burrow, you are most likely to see them when they are swarming in the springtime. Below is a comparison of carpenter ants and termites during the alate stage of development.



### Carpenter Ants

- Antennae are bent
- Front wings are longer than hind wings
- Wings come to a point
- Wings have visible, dark veins
- Body has clearly defined waist
- Body is dark in color, usually black or reddish brown



### Termite Swarmers

- Antennae are straight
- Front and hind wings are equal in length
- Wings have flat, paddle shape
- Wings extend past the body
- Body is straight and thick
- Body is light in color



### Termite Workers/Soldiers

- White insect
- Blind
- Found in soil, wood, or mud tunnels

## Signs of an Infestation

What's the key to keeping your home safe from wood-destroying insects? Watching out for the signs that these pests leave behind, and preventing an infestation from taking hold. Maintain a watchful eye for the signs and symptoms of both carpenter ants and termites.

### Carpenter Ants

- 1. Ants around your house:** You are much more likely to see carpenter ants moving through your house and across your yard than termites. Carpenter ants are especially active during the evenings in spring and summer months, so if you see ants between sunset and midnight, watch them carefully to see where they are coming from.
- 2. Piles of sawdust or wood shavings:** Remember, carpenter ants do not eat wood, so if they are excavating in your home you will find piles of sawdust or shavings around your home. These piles may give you a clue as to where the nest(s) originates.
- 3. Muffled sounds from behind walls:** If there are a lot of ants walking around inside your walls, you can sometimes hear a rustling noise. The ants make the noise with their mandibles, and it is thought to be a form of communication as it has nothing to do with chewing wood.





## Termites

- 1. Mud tunnels:** One of the most telltale signs of termites is the spotting mud tunnels on exterior walls, beams, or crawl spaces. These tunnels are how termites travel to and from their nests, protecting them from predators and dry climates.
- 2. Broken wings in the spring and summer:** Termite wings break off easily, so remnants of wings around your house and yard should indicate that the swarming insects are termites as opposed to carpenter ants.
- 3. Visible damage to wood:** Drywall, floorboards, door and window jambs, and furniture can all fall victim to termite damage. When you see signs of this damage — sometimes in the form of peeling paint, creaking floors, sticking doors, or sagging drywall — the infestation may be severe.

## Carpenter Ant Control Options

Because they are hard to spot, preventing carpenter ants from making your house their home is essential. Carpenter ants are most attracted to damp wood, so stopping leaks and preventing water damage goes a long way.

It is equally important to replace any water damaged wood as soon as possible to keep carpenter ants from finding it and burrowing inside. Any loose wood — fire wood, construction lumber — should be kept dry and elevated as well.

In the event that carpenter ants do invade your home, the best course of action is to call an experienced pest management professional. A professional has the tools and expertise to get the job done.



## Termite Control Options

Just like with carpenter ants, prevention is the key to keeping termites out of your home. Termites are even harder to spot than carpenter ants, so taking careful preventative measures can potentially keep you from an unpleasant surprise later on.

The easiest way to prevent termites is to have your home inspected regularly by a pest management professional. Early detection of termites can save you money and heartache, as dealing with an advanced termite problem can be expensive both in pest control costs and repairs to your home.

As soon as you notice signs of termites, call in the assistance of a pest management company right away. These professionals have experience with termites, and know the best methods to use to address and fix your problem.





Carpenter ants and termites have the potential to cause a lot of destruction in your home, but knowing the signs and staying vigilant can keep your home secure.

For all your pest control needs in the greater New England area, contact Bain Pest Control. We have 90 years of experience dealing with carpenter ants, termites, and other destructive pests, so we can help you prevent or remove an infestation.

Visit us at [www.BainPestControl.com](http://www.BainPestControl.com) or give us a call at **(978) 452-9621**



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