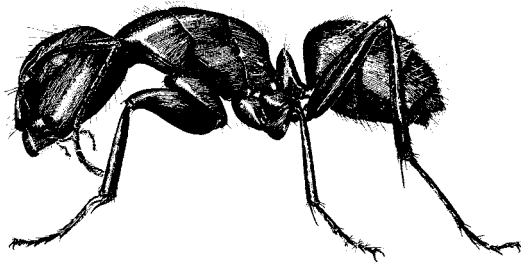


# BLACK CARPENTER ANT



## • AT A GLANCE •

- One node
- Evenly rounded thorax
- 12 antennal segments
- Overall dull black color
- Yellow hairs closely cover its abdomen
- Worker size: 1/4 to 1/2 inch (7 to 13 mm)

**I.D. Tip:** This species (*Camponotus pennsylvanicus*) is also known as the Pennsylvania carpenter ant. It is commonly called the black carpenter ant due to its overall dull black color, including its legs and antennae. Long yellow hairs closely cover its abdomen.

**Feeding Habits.** Carpenter ants feed on a wide variety of foods, including dead insects. A favored food is the sweet honeydew produced by aphids, mealybugs and scales.

**Key Inspection Tips.** It is the most common species found east of the Rocky Mountains. It is particularly common from New England west through the Midwest to the Rocky Mountains and is the most common structure-infesting carpenter ant in the eastern United States. It is less frequently seen in homes in parts of mid-South states, such as western Tennessee, parts of Mississippi and Arkansas.

This species nests exclusively in wood and the voids in buildings. Main (parent) colonies generally are located outside with satellite colonies inside structures. When looking for carpenter ants, structural guidelines should remain a focus of the inspection. Edges of sidewalks, fences, decks and fascia boards will often have ants trailing along them. By following the structural guidelines as they connect with one another, the trail may be more easily followed.

Signs of high moisture content in structural wood — water stains, peeling paint, fungi, etc. — can be an indicator of areas where carpenter ants are present. A moisture meter is handy in determining where leaks may be present or have occurred in the past. Hollow porch columns are common sites for carpenter ant activity.

Foraging workers on tree trunks may indicate a colony located somewhere up in the tree. Tree limbs which brush against the walls or the roof of the structure should be inspected for workers trailing onto the structure.

**Contributing Conditions.** Moisture and dead wood are the two primary conditions present in and around structures which contribute to carpenter ant infestations. Structures which are located in wooded areas or on wooded lots have plenty of both and, therefore, have more potential for problems with carpenter ants.

Structures without many trees on the property, however, can also experience carpenter ant infestations. This is particularly true if the structure contains numerous sites with excessive moisture. If conditions which are contributing to the carpenter ant infestation are *not corrected*, the carpenter ant problem may not be eliminated and may return as a problem in the future. ■