

Carpenter Ants ... by Inspector Weeks

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I had a call this week from a Chelsea resident who has an Ant problem. After a brief discussion it was determined that the ants in question were in fact Carpenter ants. The difference between your basic ant and a carpenter ant is the ants' antennae. Carpenter ants antennae are bent. Regular ants' antennae are straight. The other magnifying feature is a single pointed node between the abdomen and the thorax. It is quite visible with a magnifying glass.

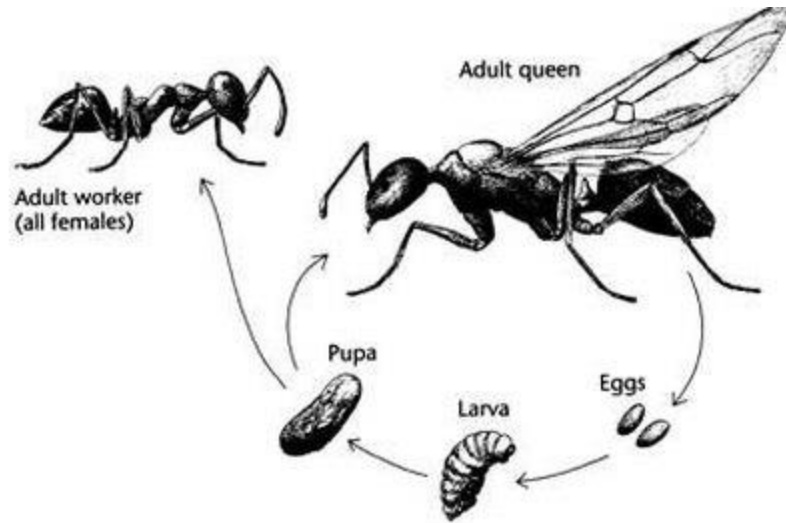
Her biggest surprise was that her house is only four years old. How could she possibly have an Ant problem!

Carpenter ants can be a problem. They don't actually eat the wood in your house, like a termite; they are not here yet, they chew the moist wood to make their nest. It is the moist wood that they are looking for because it is easier to chew. Eliminate the wet wood and that is half the battle!

My advice to her was to find out why they were coming into her house. Most likely for food. Set up a trap of sorts with icing sugar and baking soda, 50/50 mix, and watch were they go. Find the nest and eliminate it.

One thing that I have discovered is that she is not the only one in the Gatineau Hills with carpenter ants. With all the wooded areas in our community they are actually quite common. These ants can live in old stumps or rotting logs next to house and come into the house for food and leave. If, however, they find a nice warm moist area in the house, while looking for food, they will stick around and do their own renovations. If you start to see these ants with wings that should be a warning sign.

One ant colony will have one large Queen who can last up to 15 years. Once the colony reaches 3000 to 4000 ants the younger, winged females, will leave in search of a new moist location to start up her own nest. These creatures are amazing. They have also been around a longer than we have. Total elimination is not really an option. Living in a balanced harmony with the ants outside and the humans inside works best.



I welcome your questions please forward them to , Inspector Weeks ,c/o Peter Weeks Home Inspections PWHI@sympatico.ca or by phone at 613.290.3697. **Peter Weeks** has been a Chelsea resident for 17 years. As a general contractor since 1988, he has been doing **Residential Home Inspections** for about three years. He is an Associate Member of OAHI (Ontario Association of Home Inspectors), CAHPI (Canadian Association of Home & Property Inspectors) and a member of the BBB and BNI. **He is a Qualified and Fully Insured Inspector.** You may Visit his Website at www.PWHOMEINSPECTIONS.COM.