

CARPENTER BEES

DESCRIPTION

It sounds like you're being buzzed by a C-130, but is just a male carpenter bee patrolling his turf. Carpenter bees chew into wood excavating 6-8 brood cells, stocking each with a ball of pollen and a single egg. The male acts as guard. A perfectly round, shirt button-sized hole marks the entrance to the nest. If the hole is on the face of the wood, the tunnel turns at a right angle and continues with the grain of wood for several inches. Dirty yellow frass often stains the wood below the hole. Carpenter bees prefer to nest in softwoods such as redwood, cedar, and pine. Generally, they attack bare or weathered wood without paint or stain. Outdoor decks and unpainted edges of fascia board, soffits, and roof trim are favorite nest sites. Carpenter bee damage is mostly cosmetic, not structural. However, damage can be serious when they nest in groups, or reinfest old nest sites the following year, or if woodpeckers attack the wood trying to reach the carpenter bee larvae inside.

CONTROL

To control carpenter bees, a dust insecticide is puffed into the entrance holes. In addition to this, adjacent exterior areas are treated. Do not plug these holes immediately. The bees should be allowed to pass freely through the entrance where they will contact the dust and distribute it into the tunnels. Any newly matured bees will emerge through the openings and contact the dust there. In the fall, the holes can be filled and the entire wood surface painted or varnished.

