

Wood-Damaging Insects

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Name (click name for image)	Identification	Types of damage	Damage sites	Exit holes?	How damaging?
<u>Carpenter ants</u>	Large black or reddish-black ants that nest in cavities above ground	Nests constructed in solid material. Damage occurs when nests are expanded	Structural softwoods, soft building materials such as insulation board	No emergence holes per se; ants enter and exit colony to forage for food and water	Can be extremely damaging if left untreated for years
<u>Termites</u>	Delicate insects that construct colonies in wood	Termites consume wood fiber (cellulose); damage usually starts on the inside	Generally softwoods, but sometimes hardwoods, too	Termites generally remain in the infested wood; mud shelter tubes indicate an active infestation	Can be extremely damaging, especially in warm or tropical climates
<u>Lyctid powderpost beetles</u>	Small, reddish-brown to black beetles. Head visible from above	Beetle larvae bore into and destroy wood; larvae feed on starch	Mostly hardwoods: furniture, flooring, cabinets	Small, round holes about 1/16" in diameter; very fine, dusty powder	Can cause extensive cosmetic damage; occasionally cause internal damage
<u>Anobiid powderpost beetles</u>	Small, reddish-brown to black beetles. Head not visible from above	Beetle larvae bore into and destroy wood; larvae feed on starch	Mostly structural softwoods; especially damaging in damp climates	Small, circular holes about the size of a pencil lead; fine or gritty powder	Can cause extensive structural damage if not treated
<u>Round-headed wood borers</u>	Sometimes large, cream-colored wood-boring larvae with distinct head capsule. Adults often large, colorful beetles with long antennae	Beetle larvae bore in living or recently dead trees or wood that is less than 10 years old; large tunnels	Hardwoods and softwoods	Large (1/4"-1/2"), circular to oval	Damage is limited, because these beetles do not normally reinfest wood after the first generation. The old house borer may sometimes reinfest
<u>Flat-headed wood borers</u>	Adult beetles often with metallic coloration. Wood-boring larvae sometimes with flattened region behind head	Beetle larvae bore in living or recently dead trees; large tunnels	Hardwoods and softwoods	Large (1/4"-1/2"), flattened to oval holes	Damage is generally limited to first generation
<u>Horntail wasps</u>	Large, wasp-like insects with a long, harmless "stinger." Wasps may emerge in newly constructed homes (up to 3 years old)	Little structural damage; damage is limited to aesthetic damage to wall and floor coverings	Wasps emerge from softwoods used as structural components of walls and floors	Large (1/2"), round holes that often appear in interior wall surfaces such as wallboard.	Damage is generally limited to the initial exit holes because these wasps do not reinfest
<u>Carpenter bees</u>	Large, heavy-bodied bees that resemble bumblebees.	Large entrance hole with tunnels usually at right angles to entrance, which allows water and rot fungi to enter	Exterior trim wood, doors, siding, etc.	Large, round holes	Damage is minimal, but holes should be treated and repaired to prevent water infiltration

This table is adapted from H. B. Moore (1979), **Wood-Inhabiting Insects in Houses: Their Identification, Biology, Prevention and Control**. USDA, FS, DHUD publication.