

Wood-Damaging Insects

| Common name | Adult insect | Damage sites | Infested wood | Exit hole characteristics | Damage Potential |
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| carpenter ants - <i>Camponotus spp.</i> | Large (up to 3/4") black or red and black ants that nest above ground in cavities. | Wall voids, subfloor, rigid insulation. Damage caused by nest expansion. | Wood and non-wood can be infested. | No exit holes per se. | Nests can grow for years. Damage can be extensive if undetected. |
| termites | Delicate insects that live in colonies. Consume wood for food. | Generally softwood structural wood. | Some species infest dry wood while others need wood with high moisture. | Generally no exit holes but mud tubes indicate infestation. | Damage can be significant especially in tropical or warm/arid climates. |
| lyctus powderpost beetles | Small (1/8"-1/4", 3-6 mm), reddish-brown to black beetles. Head visible from above. | Sapwood of many hardwood species such as oak, hickory, ash, walnut, poplar, madrone, some tropical hardwoods and bamboo. | Dry (but generally above 8% moisture) hardwoods. Wood with high starch content preferred. | Small (1/16" - 1/8", 2 - 4 mm), circular holes about the diameter of a pencil lead, scattered over surface. May be accompanied by very fine "powder". | High, can do extensive damage to hardwoods such as furniture, cabinetry and flooring. |
| anobiid powderpost beetles | Small, reddish-brown to black beetles. Head concealed from above by hood (pronotum). | Sapwood of hardwoods and softwoods (pine, fir, Douglas-fir, etc.). | Generally older wood. Tend to be more damaging where humidity and temperatures are higher, such as coastal areas. | Small, circular holes about the diameter of a pencil lead, scattered over surface. May be accompanied by fine-gritty "powder". | High, can do extensive damage to hardwoods and softwoods especially in relatively warm and wet climates. |
| round-headed borers - family Cerambycidae | Called longhorned beetles; sometimes very large, with strong patterns on wing covers. | Both hardwoods and softwoods. | Generally wood that is less than 10 years old. | Oval to round. Much larger (1/4"-1/2", 6 - 12 mm) than the exit holes of powderpost beetles. | Generally low, however one species, the old house borer, <i>Hylotrupes bajulus</i> , may, occasionally, re-infest, particularly in unheated (damp) structures. |
| flat-headed borers - family Buprestidae | Called metallic wood-borers because of their distinctive metallic coloration. The golden buprestid is 3/4" (20 mm) long. | Both hardwoods and softwoods. | Standing trees or freshly felled logs. | Large, flattened oval holes. | Low, however considerable aesthetic damage may be done by the initial infestation. Do not re-infest. |
| horntail or wood wasps - family Siricidae | Large (3/4" - 1-1/2", 20 - 35 mm) wasp-like insect with long, harmless "stinger". Adults may emerge through wall coverings in newly (up to 3 yrs) constructed houses. | Both hardwoods and softwoods. | Standing dead or injured trees. | Large round holes. | Low, however emergence of these large (harmless) wasps indoors can be upsetting to homeowners. Most of the damage is to wall and floor coverings through which the adults emerge. Do not re-infest. |
| carpenter bees - family Anthophoridae. | Large (1/2"-1", 14 - 27 mm), heavy bodied, dark-colored bees. Adults may construct burrows in structural wood. Generally, however, the damage is inconsequential. | Exterior structural wood and trim. | Structurally sound. | Large round hole. | Low, however bees may reuse and enlarge burrows year after year. These burrows can allow penetration of water and consequent damage. Holes should be sealed and painted over to discourage bee activity and prevent water infiltration. |