

# PestGazette

Brought to you by **CastleGuard Pest Management**



## Controlling Carpet Beetles



Carpet beetles are common fabric pests that occur throughout the United States. Outdoors, adult carpet beetles are found on flowers from late spring to early summer feeding on pollen and nectar. They can be carried into the house unintentionally on flowering plants, or may enter the home through improperly sealed doors and windows. Once indoors, carpet beetle larvae can cause considerable feeding damage to fabrics, furnishings, and clothing that contain natural fibers.

As carpet beetle larvae feed, they can leave behind clues such as frass (insect droppings) and cast (shed) skins that indicate the presence of an infestation. Other signs of carpet beetles may include surface damage and irregular holes in fabrics, or uneven areas in brushes and furs. In extreme or neglected infestations, a buildup of old larval skins can even lead to skin or respiratory irritation caused from persistent contact or prolonged inhalation of the larval hairs. Therefore, it is important to contact a pest management professional at the first signs of carpet beetles to eliminate the infestation as quickly as possible.

There are four species of carpet beetles commonly found infesting fabrics and carpets: the black carpet, common carpet, furniture carpet, and varied carpet beetles. Adult black carpet beetles are black in color and range in size from 1/8" to 3/16" in length. The other three species are similar in size to the black carpet beetle, but are slightly more oval and have a variety of different wing scale patterns. Differentiating between species is important to finding the primary source of an infestation, and is the key to eliminating these pests. However, species identification can be difficult and is best left to your pest management professional.

The black carpet beetle is the most commonly encountered and economically important of the carpet beetles. Its common name comes from its typical black color. It is a primary pest of fur or feathers, but larvae can be found indoors infesting dried products such as dog food, cookies, fish meal and dried meats.

The common carpet beetle likely gets its name because it is among the most common pests of wool and silk carpets. These larvae will feed on a wide variety of animal and plant materials, but their preferred foods are carpets, clothing, and textiles made from animal fiber. Adults are most active during the daytime, and can be found flying around windows or along window sills.

The furniture carpet beetle's common name reflects that this beetle is best known for causing damage to upholstered furniture. Larvae can feed on plant materials including rice, wheat germ, and mold spores. However, they must feed on materials containing keratin, such as wool, hair, or feathers, in order to complete development.

The varied carpet beetle is similar in appearance and feeding preference to the furniture carpet beetle. This pest probably gets its name from the variation in the color pattern on its dorsal surface. Varied carpet beetle larvae feed on carpets, furs, hair and hide. Their favorite foods are dead insects or insect pupae which makes them a major pest of museum collections and structures with existing insect infestations.

No matter the species, carpet beetles can cause considerable damage to fabric goods. Remember to contact your pest management professional at the first signs of an infestation to eliminate the population and to minimize the harm these pests may cause. ■

## Shoo Fly! Don't Bother Me!

No summer picnic would be complete without hamburgers, hot dogs and ... blow flies. They are regular (unwanted) guests at warm weather cookouts, especially when meat is on the menu.

Blow flies are a diverse group of flies ranging in size from 1/4" to 1/2" in length, and generally have a *metallic sheen* to their bodies. They may be black, blue, coppery green, olive green, or bronze in color. Adult blow flies do not bite.

Blow fly larva, called maggots, feed on dead and decaying organic matter and help to break it down. They can also be attracted to nectar, carrion, garbage, and other refuse. Blow flies deposit eggs in wounds or on dead carcasses. The fly larvae

which soon hatch feed on decaying flesh or matted hair. Blow fly larvae never attack healthy tissues.

As disgusting as all of this may sound, blow flies actually serve several useful purposes. In nature, they help to facilitate decomposition, and are often the first to arrive at a crime scene. Blow fly maggots have also been used successfully in medicine to clean out necrotic tissues of patients.

Still, most people do not want them around! If you see blow flies in your home, it usually means that there is an animal carcass nearby. Most likely, a mouse or rat or some other type of urban wildlife has died within your structure. We are experts at eliminating blow flies *and* the urban wildlife and rodent pests which can attract them. Be sure to call us at the first sign of flies in your home!

## How to Fight the Bite in Your Backyard

Temperatures are not the only thing on the rise this summer. Mosquitoes thrive in the warmer and wetter summertime conditions, so populations can be expected to increase this time of year. Nearly all female mosquitoes feed on blood in order to produce eggs, and they are willing to risk your swats in order to get it! With more hungry mosquitoes flying around, it is important to protect yourself and your family from these biting pests. One way to fight the bite this summer is to cover all exposed skin with long sleeves and pants when you plan on spending time outdoors where mosquitoes may be present. If keeping completely covered isn't practical, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control rec-

ommends applying mosquito repellents that contain the active ingredients DEET, picardin, oil of lemon eucalyptus (OLE), or IR3535.

Another way to fight the bite is by eliminating mosquito breeding sites from around your home. Mosquitoes require standing water to breed because their larvae are aquatic. If water is present for more than five days in a row, it has the potential to breed mosquitoes. Different species may prefer different types of water sources to lay their eggs, but most larvae can develop in stagnant pools that are less than half an inch deep. Many of the items commonly found in your backyard such as empty pots *continued on page 4*

CastleGuard Pest  
Management

94 Jefferson Ave.  
Fairport, NY 14550

## Fight the Bite (Continued from page 1)

and bird-baths are ideal water-holding containers for mosquitoes. In addition, clogged gutters or even low areas in your yard can turn into water reservoirs that mosquitoes could breed in. So the key is to not let any water stagnate on your property. Inspect your yard frequently for low areas or items such as bottles, barrels, or other vessels that may hold water. Tip over any water containing items regularly to prevent larvae from making it to adulthood, and

to reduce the number of mosquito breeding sites around your home.

While you can prevent mosquitoes from breeding on your property, you can't control all of the conditions in your neighborhood. Additionally, adult mosquitoes can travel significant distances to find a meal. Call your pest management professional today so they can help protect your family by treating the areas around your home where adult mosquitoes commonly rest. ■

Call Today!  
585-381-0395

# CARPENTER BEE

# BUMBLE BEE

VS.

## The Summer Buzz: Identifying Carpenter Bees and Bumblebees



CARPENTER BEE



BUMBLE BEE

Carpenter bees are often seen buzzing around your backyard garden or wooden patio deck in the warmer spring and summer months. Like other native bees, these insects are essential pollinators for native plant communities. They can also play an important role in crop pollination. Carpenter bees are often confused with bumble bees because of similarities in both size and color. However, they can easily be distinguished because carpenter bees have smooth shiny black abdomens without fuzz whereas bumble bees tend to be fuzzy all over. Despite their parallels in appearance, the nesting habits of these two types of bees are quite different. Carpenter bees nest alone in tunnels chewed into wood while bumble bees live in small colonies that usually nest in the ground. Both types of bees can be beneficial, but carpenter bees can be destructive when nests are constructed in the sides of homes, wooden decks, fence posts, or other wooden structures.

Carpenter bees get their common name from their nesting habits. Eastern species of carpenter bees prefer to nest in soft woods such as cedar, redwood, cypress, pine, and fir. Western species are more commonly found nesting in hard woods such as oak, eucalyptus, and redwood. Despite their preferences, all species of carpenter bees are much less likely to nest in painted or pressure treated lumber of any type.

Carpenter bees overwinter as adults in nest tunnels and emerge in mid to late spring. After mating, the female locates a suitable nest site and begins by chewing a perfectly round entrance hole into the wood. She then excavates tunnels about five inches long that are provisioned with balls of pollen to serve as food for the larvae, and the tunnels are sealed. The larvae feed and develop in the tunnels before emerging as adults in late summer and the process begins again. Mated females may enlarge and reuse old nest tunnels for egg laying or

excavate new tunnels. Considerable damage can occur to wood that has been utilized as a nesting site year after year.

Knowing how to identify carpenter bees and their nesting habits is key to protecting your home and your property from costly wood damage. First, you can recognize the entrance to a carpenter bee nest because the hole is about a half inch in diameter and looks perfectly drilled. Second, carpenter bees make quite a mess when excavating a nest by leaving deposits of leftover wood below the hole. They also can cause noticeable staining to the area outside the entrance with yellow/brown pollen and feces. Lastly, male bees are often seen hovering around or just outside of the nest entrance in order to protect the female that is busy inside the nest. So, spotting a hovering carpenter bee could indicate a nest is nearby.

Both male and female carpenter bees can be territorial and may dive bomb anyone that comes near their nest. However, female carpenter bees

rarely sting unless provoked. Males do not have a stinger and do not sting at all. Still, most homeowners do not want to have aggressive bee-like pests around that can damage their home. Make sure to contact your pest management professional when you see signs of carpenter bees on your property in order to treat and prevent further carpenter bee damage to the wooden parts of your home. ■



Carpenter bees nest alone in tunnels chewed into wood and can be destructive when nests are constructed in the sides of homes, wooden decks, fence posts, or other wooden structures.