



CLOSE TO HOME

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Food For Thought



In blue and yellow
From it's grave
Springs up the crocus fair...
-Harriet Beecher Stowe-

Spring Quiz!

Question: What is the size of a pinhead, fast, loves patios, and is orange all over?

Answer: The Clover Mite!



April has arrived, and so have the carpenter ants. Like the crocus, though not as fair, ants have awoken from their nests deep in the center of trees in search of food and a suitable nesting place.

They are easy to identify. Any of the black ants that are 1/4 to 3/4 of an inch long are probably carpenter ants. The picture to the right shows the black stripes on the abdomen, a clear characteristic of the larger ants. Also watch for the elbowed antenna. This time of year they will swarm as well, with the flying black ants emerging from the nest.

So what do carpenter ants eat? It is a common misperception that carpenter ants eat wood. They don't. Wood is simply a nesting place for them. The sawdust left in the area of a nest is an indication of the work they do in nest building. Thus their name.

What carpenter ants eat varies during the warmer

months of the year. In the early season, sweets are what their radar zeroes in on. It is not unusual to find carpenter ants infesting boxes of sweet cereal, the honey pot, sugar bowl, or spillage on counters that you thought was completely cleaned up. Dishwashers are common places to



remnants to feast on.

Always rinse your empty soda and beer cans thoroughly before storage in the recycle bag. This is a major hotspot and will attract ants from a very long distance! In scientific studies it has been shown that carpenter ants will forage as far as two football fields in search of good food! Beer and soda is good food...

As the peonies begin bud-

ding in mid May, carpenter ants (and other ants) can be seen eating something on the tight buds. Aphids are busy here eating and depositing a honey dew that ants love. Here is one of those natural symbiotic relationships! Pesticide manufacturers have reproduced this honey dew material in the lab. It serves as an attractant in effective carpenter ant baits.

Later in the summer, ant feeding habits change to incorporate more proteins. They eat other insects, crumbs we leave behind on the floor, and even each other when the going gets tough.

There you have it, some food for thought when you wonder why those carpenter ants aim for your kitchen every spring. (So do the kids, when they come home from school.)

Who do you want in your cupboards?



THE PEST INSPECTOR'S JOURNAL!

THE ODD - THE SCARY - THE HUMOROUS

Last summer I received a call from a customer concerned about nesting material he found in the aluminum tracks of his storm windows. The grassy nest was in several locations.

The insect pictured, along

with it's nest is oddly enough called the grass carrier wasp! They are solitary nesters in the spring. Their biggest annoyance is the grass nest in the window tracks. I would not consider these a serious stinging pest. The wasp is only present at nest building.



Home Energy Audits

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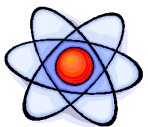


YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED HERE!

Q: What is a Home Energy Audit and how will it help me save energy costs?

A: Home energy audits are a valuable tool to increase residential energy efficiency. They look at a broad range of factors in the home that contribute to energy efficiency including insulation, air leakage, furnace and AC functions, ducting, and appliances.

Fraysier Home Inspections has partnered with CMC energy Services in providing energy audits in the Rochester area. Our audits are unique in that we have no financial interests in the recommendations made. It is an independent audit.



With energy costs increasing each year, the time for an energy audit has never been better. Contact

us for more information!

Q: I have noticed small bees that look like honeybees burrowing in the sand in my side yard. What are they, and do they sting?

A: The first warm and humid days of Spring when temperatures reach into the sixties and higher, conditions are perfect for Mining Bees to emerge from the soil and begin new excavations.

They are called Mining Bees because of the tunnels they build in soil to their nest site. They are solitary bees so no large nest exists underground. On warm days, they can be seen hovering over the ground (in the hundreds!). They prefer sandy soils where the grass cover is



ASK JOHN!

thin. Though they are capable of stinging, they usually do not unless handled.

Q: I have a carpenter bee problem on my garage, but I don't want to hurt the bees if they are pollinators. Are they beneficial for plants?

A: Yes, carpenter bees are

pollinators and are beneficial to agriculture. In fact, all of the bees are pollinators, including honey bees, bumble bees, mining bees, and carpenter bees. Of these, the honey bees are best known for their pollination because of their sheer numbers in a hive. Because these hives survive the winter, great stores of honey must be produced to feed the colony. Thus the great need to "make hay while the sun is shining".

Care should be taken when controlling any kind of insect, as they all benefit the big picture in some way. Factors to consider in your decision first are human health and safety, and structural damage concerns.

There's a big wide world beyond your property where bees can fly free. I recommend protecting your family and investment.