

PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE

Pest Control in Massachusetts and New Hampshire
for Colonial Pest Control, Inc.



Chris Williams

WELCOME,

AND THANKS FOR DOWNLOADING OUR E-BOOK.

We've gathered together loads of information, expert opinions, tips, and tricks for dealing with pests you currently have and preventing other pests in the future.

To start, we've narrowed our focus to carpenter ants, mice, termites, wasps, and preventive pest maintenance. We'll cover other topics in the future, and would love your feedback on which pests you'd like to learn more about.

My team and I are passionate about pest control, and are pleased to have this opportunity to pass along our knowledge and experience to you.

Thanks for your time, and please enjoy!

Sincerely,
Chris Williams



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	4
Coping with Carpenter Ants	5
Managing Your Mice	7
Treating Termites	9
Wiping Out Wasps	11
Preventing Pests in Your Home	13
Conclusion	15

INTRODUCTION

Pests are everywhere. Outside, indoors, in the city, in the country, no matter where you are or where you go, there are pests.

Pests are especially challenging for homeowners. Oftentimes people are blissfully unaware that they even have pests until telltale signs begin to appear — or in the case of termites and carpenter ants, the structure collapses.

Ridding yourself of pests is usually a twofold process — first the pests you have must be dealt with, and then steps need to be taken to ensure that those

pests never return and new ones never find their way into the home. Some of these processes and procedures are things you can do yourself, and others should be left to the professionals.

Whether you've got a few seasonal bugs or are dealing with a full-blown infestation, your best weapon is knowledge. Knowing how pests behave, how and why they do what they do, and how to safely and effectively deal with them is your strongest defense against these determined little foes.

COPING WITH CARPENTER ANTS

What do carpenter ants look like?

Carpenter ants are some of the biggest ants you'll see around your property. Typically, it's a large black ant. Carpenter ants aren't all large, though.

Within a colony, there are different sizes of ants depending on the job they have to do, including the king and queen ants.

The queen carpenter ant is just a large bomber of an ant with two smoky brown wings. Once the queen mates with the smaller wasp-like male, she'll chew her wings off, so you'll see little stubs of the wings.

But those are typically the biggest ants you'll ever see. If you step on them, all these white eggs come out the back, so that's how you'll know it's a queen ant.

Sometimes in the summer, there are just hundreds of them walking around the yard.

What's the danger with carpenter ants? Will they eat your house?

Carpenter ants can do substantial damage over time. But the good news is, they don't eat wood.

They get their name, the carpenter ant, from their ability to excavate galleries or chambers within the wood itself to store their eggs, pupae, and larvae throughout the development process.

But more commonly, the carpenter ants are living in pre-made wall voids around windows, door frames, things of that nature. It's almost like a starter kit for an ant nest, if you will.

They can also burrow through the wood. They've got quite powerful mandibles that allow them to pick off little individual flecks. Over time, the nest area itself is a clean hollow chamber with almost acoustic wood fibers in there.

They keep the nest very clean, which results in what's called frass or sawdust being removed from the nest. Sometimes you'll see some material falling out of

a window frame or on a cellar sill that might indicate some nest activity in that location.

If you've identified carpenter ants in your house, what do you do?

The first step, as with most pest control issues, is a thorough inspection. A pest control expert will try to locate the areas where the ants are most active throughout the structure. They may be going outside to feed on bushes or on little insects on the shrubs.

They could also be utilizing moisture leaks within the structure like a leaky bathroom, or plumbing leak. They can take advantage of the house in that way.

Carpenter ants also use different parts of the structure for their colony development. A hot attic is great to speed the pupal development and get more ants functioning in the house, and then quieter, warmer areas where the larvae live and feed the colony. The house is a pre-made ant nest.



In some cases, the colony can be quite extensive and even work between several structures. It's not uncommon to have a very, very large ant colony.

So do the pest control experts come in and spray chemicals?

Yes. The treatment is a three-pronged process. The backbone of the chemical treatment involves the use of non-repellent chemicals around the foundation. These safe, low-toxicity materials are available to be picked up by the ants as they move to and from the structure from their feeding ground in the forest.

As this material is trans-located back to the nest, the colony begins to suffer the effects from this chemical. And within about a month, most of the ants have been killed off.

Depending on the timing of the treatment, the results can take from three to five weeks, depending on the size of the colony, and what exactly is happening.

The interior areas of the structure should also be treated to limit the ant activity within, because as the colony gets upset by these materials, the workers that come out will die a little bit quicker.

The third part of the process involves the direct treatment of the

nest, if it can be found. In some ant situations, the nest is available for treatment.

How does one prevent carpenter ants from coming into the house in the first place?

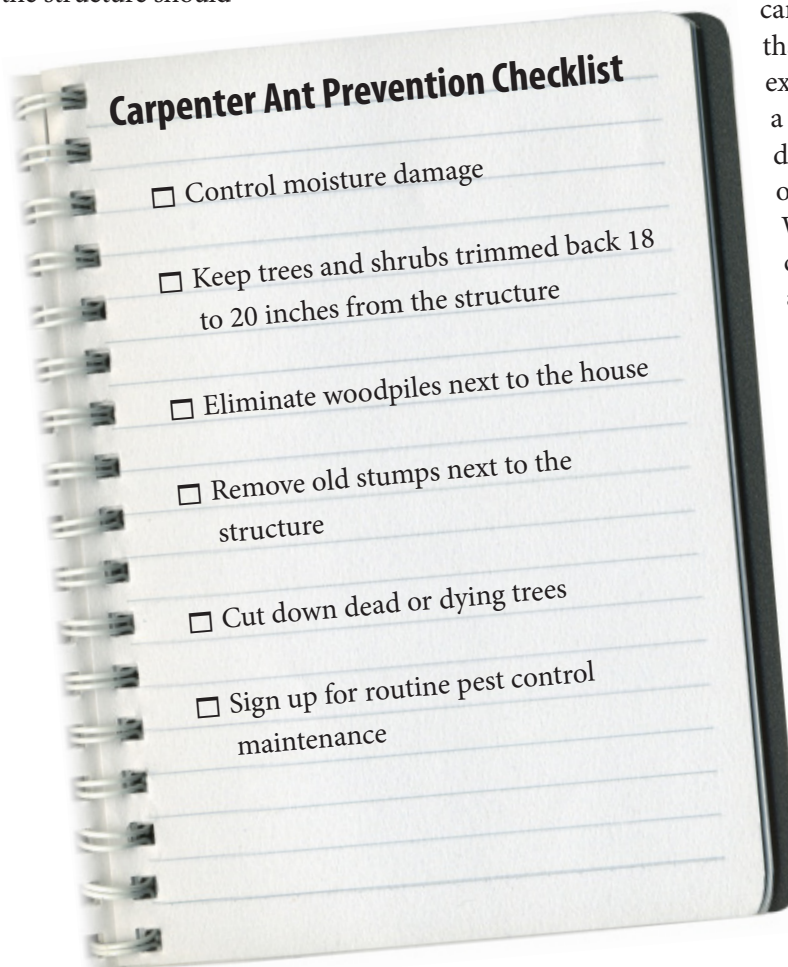
Some of the things that can be done around any house would be to just do things like controlling moisture damage, and keeping trees and shrubs trimmed back 18 to 20 inches from the structure.

Eliminating common nest sites like woodpiles next to the house, old stumps next to the structure, and dead and dying trees that look like they're filled with ants can also make the house less conducive to carpenter ants.

Unfortunately in New England, there are so many carpenter ant queens that are produced, it's very difficult to seal up the house because they can get into just about any small opening.

But one of the things that can be done that's very effective is routine pest control maintenance for

carpenter ants. Structures that have preventative exterior treatments on a continual basis really don't seem to have a lot of ant activity over time. With routine treatments, carpenter ants will not be able to establish a colony within the structure, leading to an ant-less life.



MANAGING YOUR MICE

How do you know if you have mice in your house?

Mice can present a number of different symptoms. One of the more common things you'll see is little black spindly droppings, maybe underneath the sink or in the silverware drawer, up on the counters.

Another indication of mice might be intermittent chewing or tapping noise in the wall, where a mouse is chewing his nut or scratching in the wall, moving throughout the structure. Those can be some indications of a mouse issue at large.

Why do mice come into houses?

Mice enter the house for a number of reasons. Like all creatures, mice need to have a place to shelter from the outside world, get away from predators, and if it's a little bit warmer, they can do quite well. In the colder months, mice actually suffer from hypothermia outside. If a mouse can get inside the house, it can actually go to sleep.

They also store food inside the structure and may also find food sources within the structure as well. A home is a very inviting spot for a mouse.

What does a pest control company do if someone calls with a mouse problem?

The first thing is a thorough inspection of the structure to identify the areas where the mice are working throughout the house and to find areas where the mice are able to gain access to the structure.

Typically, that will be around garage door frames, the bulkhead, an unfinished door in the cellar, places where the air conditioning or gas lines go through the wall, corners where there's a construction deficiency, even chimney flashing, or places up on the roof could allow mice to enter the structure. There are very small openings throughout the house that need to be paid attention to.

Bait products can also potentially minimize the population. The main focus of mouse control would be to knock down the population at large in the structure, and then do what can be done to prevent new mice from entering.

Usually, that process is pretty successful. Results come within about two weeks from the treatment. In most cases, the mouse problem can be solved pretty easily.

How many mice do people have in their houses? What's typical to see?

It's difficult to ascertain the level of most populations within a structure. A large mouse population might have an odor inside the house. You



could actually smell the mice themselves. A large buildup of droppings — if you're actually seeing mice run around the structure, that's a bad sign.

Mice don't like to interact with each other; they have territories within the house. You can have a substantial number of mice, even if you don't see some, but once you start seeing mice running around, that indicates that you've got a good size population.

If the mice eat the bait, are they going to die in the walls, or what happens to them?

Whenever bait products are used, there's a potential that a mouse could die in an inopportune location such as a wall, void, or up in the ceiling. There's usually a small amount of odor associated with the liquid material, volatilizing from the mouse. Once the mouse dries up and the little cadaver is dry, there's really not a lot of smell after that.

However, if you have a substantial amount of dead mice, there can be quite an odor. That sometimes is an issue.

What happens then? Do pest control technicians have to go into walls?

Digging into the wall to find dead mice is generally not recommended, because they might be just about anywhere, and the smell could be coming out of a light socket or some moldings. It may be difficult to locate the mouse without doing substantial damage to the structure in the search for it.

What's the danger of having mice in your house?

First and foremost, mice carry a lot of diseases. Fleas, ticks, tapeworms, there's a number of things that can be spread through the urine and droppings, the hantavirus being one. As mice move throughout the structure, they're defecating and leaving their little fecal pellets all over the place.

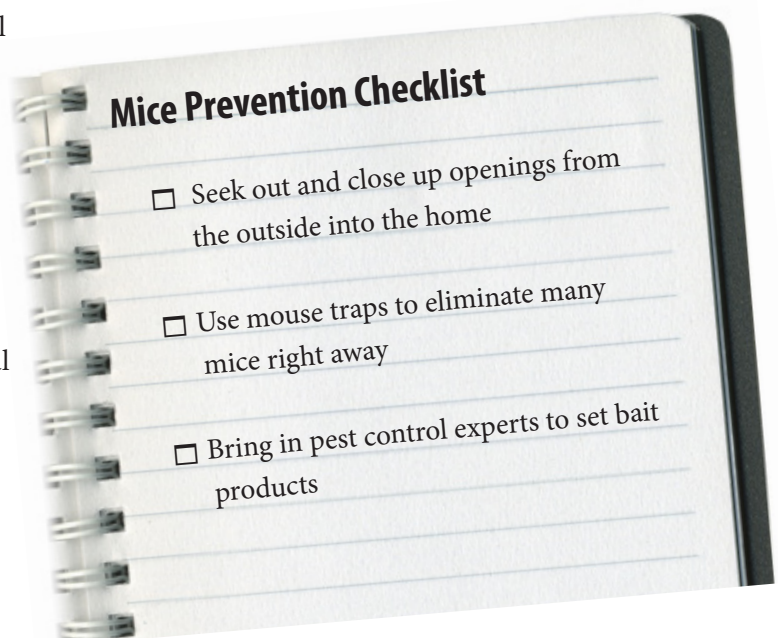
Mice urinate frequently and with no control, so wherever he's walking, he's urinating. They're also walking in unkempt areas of the structure, so they could be picking up other bacteria and diseases and carrying that on their body wherever they move.

Another issue with mice is actual physical damage, things like gnawing on water pipes, cables, electrical equipment, things like washing machine controllers, air conditioning, and irrigation controllers. All of those things sort of resemble little vines and things that the mice would naturally chew. They always chew these things and they can cause extensive damage and even unknown origin house fires, so it is a serious issue to have mice in the house.

Are mouse traps an old-fashioned tactic that nobody uses anymore?

Mouse traps can be a very important part of the control process. Typically, they're a little bit more work to use, because once the mouse is on it, he's got to be removed from the trap. Some folks don't prefer mousetraps, because they'll actually see the dead animal.

But any kind of trapping can be used in a control management process for mice. They're valuable in the case of high population, when you want to just get as many as possible right away. That can be a valuable part of a management program for mice.



TREATING TERMITES

Are termites ever an issue in the New England area?

Surprisingly, yes. Termites are actually in the moderate level in southern New Hampshire, at a nice span that runs across North America at about that same latitude. Currently, there's termite activity as far north as the lakes region in New Hampshire and areas like Nashua, Merrimack, and Bedford. Basically, the Merrimack River Valley in the moderate range. It's something that every homeowner should be concerned with.

How do you know if you have termites?

Termites produce what are known as swarmers in the springtime. In fact, some of this is taking place right now as the temperatures warm up a little bit in the morning. As the sun hits the soil on the south side of the house, termite colonies can sense those conditions. Oftentimes, they'll swarm out of the basement of the house near the furnace.

You'll come down, find a pile of little wings and stuff like that all over the basement. Maybe it happened last year at a little bit smaller level or the year before. Typically, it happens about the same event time every year. Each swarm will be progressively larger.

A lot of folks think that they're flying ants, but the termites have four distinct sets of wings that are all the same size, unlike ants, which have a larger forewing. It's pretty easy to tell termites from ants. Also, when the termites swarm their wings fall off, you might just find little translucent wings all over the basement. That's an indication that something is happening.

Termites can cause a lot more damage than ants, right?

That's correct. Termites actually are feeding on wood food sources. Once they make contact with the

structure, if there's available moisture, they can continue to eat the house for many, many years, typically until someone notices that the termites are actually acting.

Because termites are very discreet and cryptic insects, they're able to work within the wood. In many cases you don't even know that anything is happening until a swarm takes place or if a contractor is doing some repairs, and they find the termite damage itself.

Typically, once you realize that you have a termite problem, the jig is up and control measures can safely be made to eliminate the problem. The biggest risk with termites is their damage taking place in an unknown, hidden fashion.



What does a professional do to get rid of these termites?

The first thing they would do is inspect the structure for areas where the termites are usually found — garage door frames, behind the front door stoop, behind finished walls. Areas where termites typically work have something that allows them to be there.

Once it's determined that the termites are in fact attacking the structure or feeding on it, a lot can be done locally to discourage them with light chemical

spot treatments to just say, “Hey, this is not a good place to work.” The backbone of termite treatment today is the Sentricon Termite Colony Elimination System from Dow AgroSciences.

In a nutshell it’s a bait-based system. It offers the termites bait material in stations — restaurants placed around the structure, if you will. The termites find this cellulose-based bait material. They begin to share this throughout the colony, causing colony collapse through certain functions that this bait affects within the termite.

It actually does not affect ants or earthworms. It’s safe for kids and the environment. It affects only termites that feed on it and it’s a wonderful product. It’s absolutely safe and 100 percent effective in every case. It’s the professionals’ go-to treatment for termites these days.

Once the termites have been eliminated, what can be done to keep them from coming back?

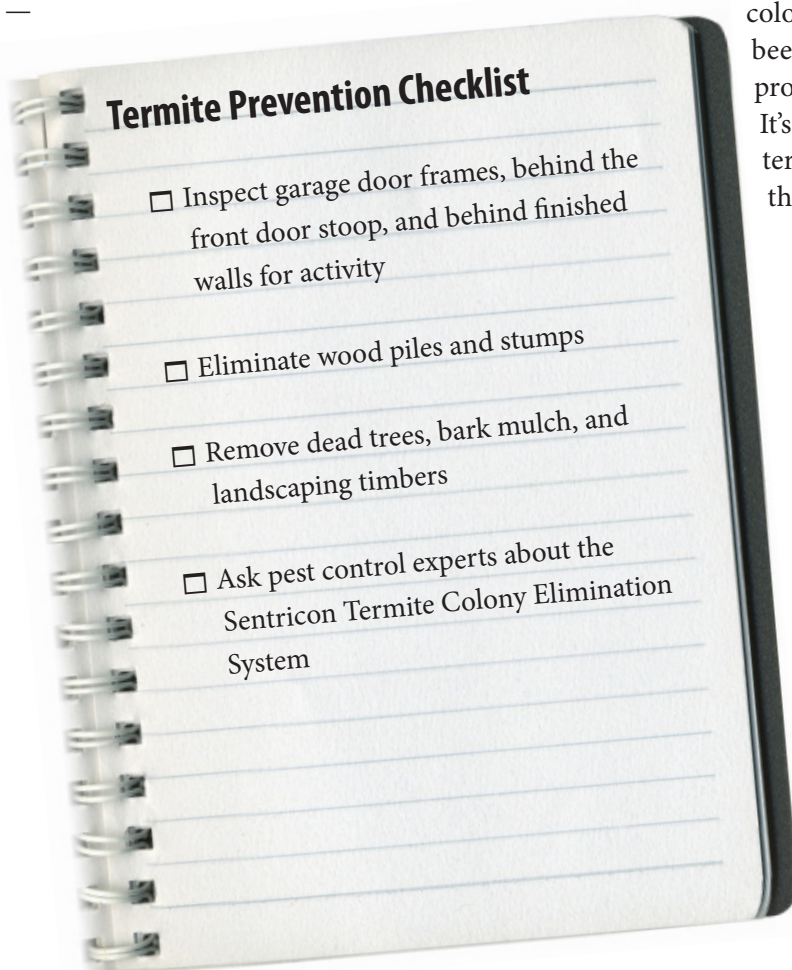
Well, there’s a lot that can be done from the homeowner’s perspective — eliminating food sources like wood piles, stumps, dead trees, bark mulch, and landscaping timbers. Termites

basically feed on wood, so if you go around your property and eliminate wood food sources, you’ve done a lot right there to minimize the amount of termites that can actually be on your property.

Once it’s been determined that you’ve got a termite issue, the Sentricon system can be used as a long-term management strategy to safely monitor for the activity of termites near the structure and while it’s doing that, actually control a new colony.

Let’s say, for example, three or four years ago a pest control company got rid of a termite colony on your property. The Sentricon system has been sitting there since then and there’s been no activity. That provides some information right there that can be reported back to the homeowners. The system is in place, it’s working properly, and termites have not been located in it for the last several years.

Conversely, upon inspection, say station number 17 has had signs of feeding. At that point, it’s clear that not only has a new termite colony been intercepted, it’s been controlled or it’s in the process of being controlled. It’s a win-win situation for termite management with the Sentricon system.



WIPING OUT WASPS

It's the time of year for insects like wasps to come out. What kind of wasps are we dealing with around here?

There are four major types of wasps in this area. The two most common would be the Northern Paper Wasps — that's the reddish-brown guy with long legs — then there's the European Banded Paper Wasps, a smaller yellow and blackish fellow. The hallmark of these two wasps would be small paper nests.

Another wasp encountered frequently would be the mud dauber wasp. He's a larger black metallic twitchy thing. They make what looks like a hockey puck on the side of the house with little clay chambers, where they put their eggs and larvae.

The fourth type of wasp is the yellow jacket, or Vespid species, very aggressive wasps that tend to nest in wall voids within the structure.

All of these wasps can sting and have various amounts of aggressiveness. The mud dauber would be the least aggressive.

Then you get down to the yellow jackets, which are very aggressive defending their nest, especially later in the season as the nest can become very large.

Let's say, for example, you've got a nest up in a gas grill and you haven't used the grill for a while. You could open that right up and they would sting you right there, just in a defensive mode.

Most of the time, people get stung when they don't know where the nest is. Let's say it's up under the shutters and you're cleaning the shutters. You go to take the shutter off and there's a whole bunch of these paper wasp nests right there. Not a terrible thing, but if you're on a ladder, it can be an issue.

What do you do if you find a nest?

The first thing would be to slowly back away from it. Typically, if you're moving fairly slowly, these things won't see you.



But you should call a pest control professional in most cases. Smaller nests, you could spray it with a can of home pesticide or knock it off with a broom. But professionals have safe and effective methods to remove even the largest yellow jacket nest. They have bee suits and specialized equipment to take the fight right to them without getting stung.

Professionals are better equipped than most homeowners in dealing with wasps' nests. You don't want to get stung, especially if you're allergic. There can be some severe health issues, especially if you get into a multiple sting event.

Let's say you're mowing the lawn with your lawn mower and you run over an in-ground nest, you could have upwards of 50 stings. If you are allergic to yellow jackets or bees, that could be a serious health issue right there.

What can you do to prevent wasps from settling around your house?

A lot can be done by sealing up the gable vents, and making sure that there's tight screening around

the soffit edges. Also sealing any potential openings around the structure, behind light switches and outlets, and making sure that the screens and screen doors fit tightly.

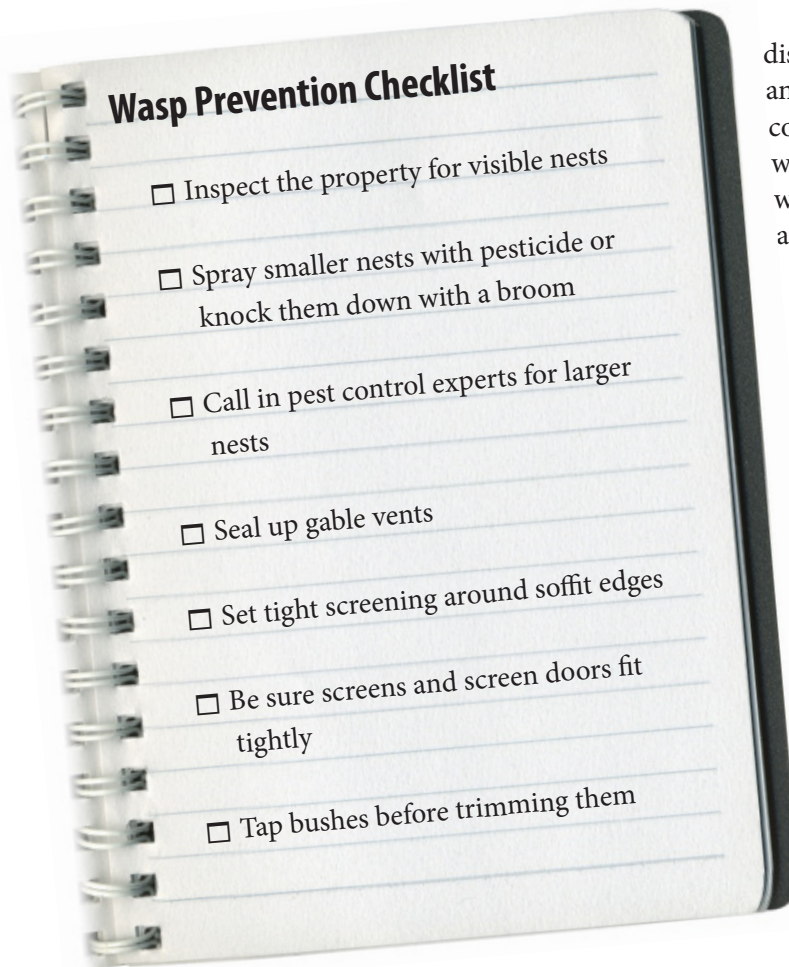
Inspecting, from time to time, around the property is important too. As wasp nests grow, they become more visible and you can see the worker wasps coming and going from the nest. Periodic inspections of the structure can also reveal hidden wasp nests.

Another thing highly recommend as you're pruning bushes in the mid-

summer, would be to tap the bush a few times with the rake before you start cutting. That way if there's any wasp activity, you've got a little bit more chance of escaping from it.

Sometimes they can be hard to see back in the foliage, you're going about your business, trimming and then you get stung. It's quite a panic if you don't know what's happening.

Getting some disturbance into bushes and just looking around for coming and going is a great way to protect yourself from wasps as you're working around the structure.



PREVENTING PESTS IN YOUR HOME

What can a homeowner do to protect a house against pests?

As well as just routine maintenance, making sure that you don't have water damage, cutting bushes back off the house, general home repairs, and keeping everything ship-shape is number one.

But number two, you should bring in pest control experts on a semi-annual basis. Be sure they use safe and effective pesticides, and target areas like the foundation, windows, doors, and the roof line as a preventative.

The typical lower treatment is designed more for ants and crawling insects. The upper areas are treated for wasps and spiders that could gain access.

A twice-a-year pesticide treatment covers everything but termites, birds, bats, flies, bedbugs, and wildlife. It should cover carpenter ants, spiders, pantry pests, cockroaches, fleas, and mice.

Do all the pests just die right away? How does it work?

Most of the chemicals are fairly slow-acting materials designed to be picked up by the insects. In most cases, unless you spray the bug directly, he's got some time to live.

But as the insects pass across these chemicals, they're picked up on their hairy bodies, and then in most cases, ingested through the cleaning process.

Once the insect ingests a couple of these particles, it usually takes within an hour or two for the insect to die. Because there's so little chemical on the house, you don't have a buildup of chemical.

You're not going to see dead insects all around the house right away. But over time, if you don't clean the front porch, there'll be quite an accumulation of little guys there after a year or so, that have made the bad mistake of coming onto your house.



What about pets, dogs, cats, or small children? Is it safe for everyone?

Absolutely. Treatments are designed number one with the safety of your family and pets in mind. Typically, the areas treated are just the structure itself and the soil right adjacent to the structure.

In each case, special precautions should be taken to move toys, pet toys, and children's items around the house. If you've got little kids that are having a pool

party, you should keep them out of that area for an hour or two until the chemical dries, but in most cases after the application, within an hour or so, it's business as usual.

What happens if, after this treatment is applied, a homeowner finds an ant or something?

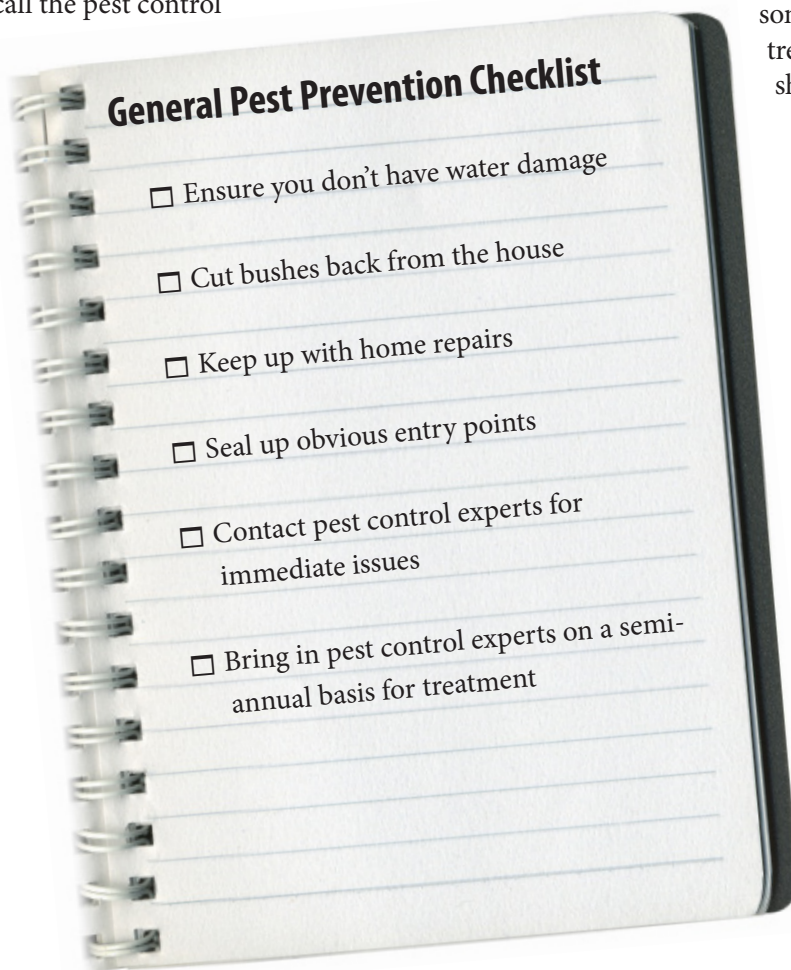
As a rule, one insect isn't big trouble, but people have varying thresholds for insects. If you think that you're still having an issue with anything, the best thing to do would be to call the pest control professionals who performed the treatment right away.

They'll take the appropriate actions. Sometimes they can walk you through.

In the springtime, one of the things most often faced is the onslaught of queen carpenter ants. These have been born out a million nests on a warm summer day. It's typically the biggest ant you've ever seen.

Along about the end of May, the first few weeks of June, and maybe into July, there are a lot of calls of "There's one big ant in my bathtub!" or "We found two of the biggest ants we ever saw in the front hall!"

That's typically not a problem, but go ahead and call the professionals if you notice something between treatments. Satisfaction should be guaranteed.



CONCLUSION

The Massachusetts and New Hampshire regions are rife with pests, and the only way to be rid of them is to deal with them. Whether you choose to tackle the job yourself or bring in a professional team, the general rule of thumb is the sooner the better — especially with wood-destroying pests like carpenter ants and termites.

Professional pest control service is comprehensive and effective. Professional pest control technicians know exactly what to do, which eliminates guesswork and wasted time and effort on your part. Professional exterminators follow careful safety procedures, which are designed to get rid of the pest problem without risk to you, your family, or your pets. And if you're like most homeowners, you just don't want to have to deal with it.

If you're looking for a pest-free life, contact Colonial Pest Control at 1-800-525-8084 for a free quote.

About Colonial Pest Control

Colonial Pest Control Inc. is one of the largest and most sought-after pest control companies in central and eastern Massachusetts, southern New Hampshire, and southern Maine. Our service area runs from Worcester to Boston; Framingham and Natick to Andover and Lowell; Nashua to Manchester up to Portsmouth; Fitchburg and Leominster down to Milford and Franklin; and includes all surrounding towns. Since 1984, Colonial has been providing effective, low-cost protection from pests for residential homeowners. Today, we have more than 8,000 satisfied residential customers under contract for preventative maintenance.

We welcome the opportunity to meet with you and to meet your pests. At that time, we will discuss your specific pest problem and outline the various treatment and preventative maintenance options offered by Colonial. In no time, we will get you and your family back to enjoying pest-free living!