

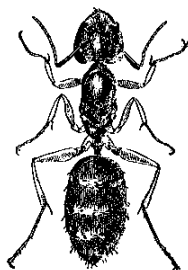
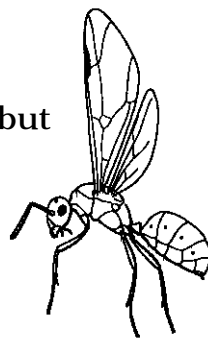
Pests Associated with Firewood

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Firewood is a source of warmth and comfort, but it's also an important avenue for pests to enter the home. Most pests living in firewood pose no threat to people, furniture, or to the structure. Nonetheless, homeowners often become concerned when insects emerge from wood brought into the home and crawl or fly about the house.

Several types of pests may be found living in firewood. Some tunnel and feed within the wood whereas others simply hide or overwinter beneath the bark. Five important groups of insects that tunnel into firewood are carpenter ants, termites, woodborers bark beetles and horntail wasps.

Carpenter Ants - Wood stacked on the ground which remains moist for extended periods can become infested by carpenter ants. These large black or reddish ants do not eat wood, but hollow out galleries in the wood for nesting. In contrast to termites, the galleries contain no mud and have a smooth, sandpapered appearance.



Bringing in carpenter ant-infested wood will not normally result in an infestation becoming established in a structure.

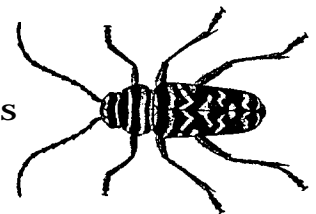
Termites - Firewood stacked directly on the ground is also subject to attack by termites. Mud tunnels may be visible on the outside of logs, or mud-lined galleries on the inside if the wood is split.



Termites are likely to be present in firewood during the fall but become dormant and leave the wood during the winter. **Termites brought into the home in firewood will not infest structural wood or furniture.**

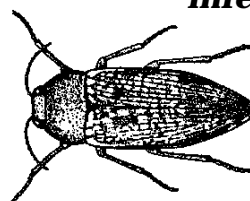


Woodborers - Several species of woodboring beetles infest firewood, usually before the tree is cut or while the logs are still green. Adults are 1/2 to 1-1/2 inches long. Longhorned beetles have antennae which are as long or longer than the body.



Metallic woodboring beetles have short antennae and bullet-shaped bodies with a metallic sheen.

The chances of any woodboring beetle (including old house borer) emerging from firewood and infesting a structure is remote.



However, people often become alarmed by the chewing sounds of the larvae within the wood or when the rather large and intimidating beetles emerge and fly about the home.

Bark beetles - These beetles are less than 1/8 inch long and brown or black in color. They tunnel immediately beneath the bark of dead or dying trees, excavating elaborately-patterned galleries on the surface of the wood.



Firewood infested with bark beetles is a hazard to healthy trees of the same species adjacent to the wood pile. However, these beetles will not reinfest structural wood or furniture within the home. Large numbers of emerging bark beetles can become quite annoying, however, when firewood is stored for long periods inside the structure.

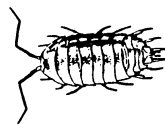
Horntail Wasps -

These large wasp looking insects are frightening to look at, but pose no threat to either the home or the home owner. Their large ovipositor is adapted for laying eggs in wood and not for stinging people.



Miscellaneous Invaders - Various other pests hide or overwinter beneath the bark of firewood.

Examples include sowbugs/pillbugs, centipedes, ground beetles,

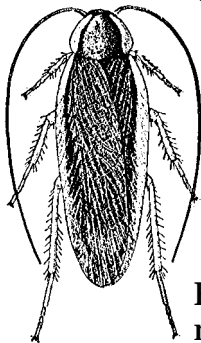


spiders, scorpions and cockroaches.

Usually, these pests emerge within a few days of the wood being brought indoors.

For the most part, they are

harmless, other than being a nuisance.



Avoiding Firewood Pests

Control of firewood pests is best accomplished by management of the firewood itself. Spraying the wood with insecticides is not necessary, nor recommended and could result in harmful vapors when the wood is burned. A much better approach would be to:

1. Store firewood outdoors. Bringing in, only what you plan to burn immediately or within a few hours. Storing firewood for extended periods inside the home, garage or basement allows pests developing or hiding in the wood to emerge within the structure. Firewood stored indoors can also become a harborage for rodents.
2. Position the woodpile away from the side of the house and off the ground. Firewood stacked against the side of a building can create a moisture problem and provides a hidden, direct avenue for termites and carpenter ants into the structure. Stacking the wood off the ground (e.g., on poles suspended between concrete blocks), increases air circulation and drying.
3. Burn older wood first to minimize the time during which arthropod infestations can become established.

Controlling Firewood Insects in the Home

For insects that do emerge indoors, simply remove them by hand picking or using a vacuum cleaner. If they are hard to catch, because they are flying around, an indoor aerosol containing pyrethrins may be helpful.

*Adapted from an article in "Kentucky Pest News"
Oct. 1991 by Mike Potter.*