

Camponotus vicinus

Quick Facts:

Stings: No.

Colony Size: Medium to large.

Official Pest Status: Is a pest because it nests in wood.

Nesting habits: Holes, timber, buildings.

Habitat: Open Woods.

Size: 2 – 3 cm (½ of an inch)

Common name: none. Members of the genus *camponotus* are often called carpenter ants.

Identifying characters:

Camponotus vicinus ants have a single node-like or scale-like petiole and the tip of the abdomen has a circular or U-shaped opening, usually fringed with hairs (acidopore). These ants have well developed eyes. *Camponotus vicinus* have 12 antennal segments (including the long, first segment).

The key factors in determining this species are its large size and the smooth and rounded top of the thorax.

Other Notes:

Camponotus vicinus are members of the genus *Camponotus*. The genus *Camponotus* is present worldwide, and commonly known as carpenter ants. Of *Camponotus* species, 18 are native to California, including *vicinus*.

Despite popular belief, *Camponotus* do not always nest in wood.

Even when these ants do nest in wood, they do not eat it; they simply use the wood as a structure for their nest. However, *Camponotus* can inhabit a variety of materials including building insulation and dirt. They may also build their nests under rocks. *Camponotus vicinus* is reported to have colony sizes of up to 100,000 ants.

Camponotus vicinus often eat sweets and dead insects and they sometimes farm aphids. Since humans often have lots of sweets in storage, the ants often enter houses and gather food. This, combined with their ability to nest in wood makes *Camponotus* ants a major pest.



Camponotus vicinus photos, courtesy of antweb.org



A *Camponotus vicinus* ant, by Alex Wild. (Wild, 2004)

Original Species Description:

Mayr, G. 1870. Neue Formiciden. *Verh. Zool.-Bot. Ges. Wien* 20: 939-996.

A pdf document of Mayr's description can be found at: <http://antbase.org/ants/publications/3310/3310.pdf>
The article is written in German.

Other references:

Hansen, L. D. and Klotz J. H. 2005. *The Carpenter Ants of the United States and Canada*. The Cornell University Press, Cambridge, Mass.

Antweb (2003). Genus: *Camponotus*, San Fransisco, CA: California Academy of Sciences (CAS). <http://www.antweb.org/browse.do?subfamily=formicinae&name=camponotus&rank=genus&project=calants>

Antweb (2003). Subfamily: Formicinae, San Fransisco, CA: California Academy of Sciences (CAS). <http://www.antweb.org/browse.do?name=formicinae&rank=subfamily&project=calants>

Wild (2006). Myrmecos.net, Sacramento, CA: Myrmecos.net
See <http://www.myrmecos.net/>.



A *Camponotus vicinus* queen, by Alex Wild. (Wild, 2004)

Other pictures:



A *Camponotus vicinus* major grooming, by Alex Wild. (Wild, 2004)



Two *Camponotus vicinus* majors from different colonies fighting, by Alex Wild. (Wild, 2004)