



Prevention Techniques

- Carpenter bees prefer weathered wood, especially softwood such as redwood, cedar, cypress, and pine. If possible, use hardwoods to construct exterior areas susceptible to carpenter bee nests. Carpenter bees typically avoid hardwoods for nest building.
- Carpenter bees prefer unpainted wood. Paint, varnish, or pressure-treat exterior wood regularly to reduce weathering and deter bees from nesting.
- While carpenter bees are capable of building their nests from scratch, they can be opportunists and use existing cracks and depressions as starter holes. Fill any pits and gaps in wood surfaces so they are less attractive to bees.
- Provide homes specifically for carpenter bees. Do this by placing a few scrap blocks of wood around your yard. Some sources recommend providing large nesting holes or pre-drilling wood blocks for the carpenter bees. We're not saying this tactic won't work, but carpenter bees have evolved to be wood-boring bees, so we prefer giving them wood to drill their own nesting holes. This method keeps the bees around to help pollinate your yard and garden!
- If you find any unoccupied holes, you can fill them with steel wool and caulk to prevent their reuse. Wait until the new bees have emerged before filling the tunnels. Waiting allows your garden to reap the benefits of these fantastic pollinators—the damage is already done after all. Once filled, paint or varnish the repaired surfaces.
- Carpenter bees (and other social wasps) will avoid nesting in the same area as wasps. Try building a fake wasp nest. Inflate a paper bag, cinch the end closed, and hang the paper bag under the eave of your house. While this technique deters carpenter bees from building new nests, it will not cause them to leave existing nests.
- Almond oil and citrus oil are carpenter bee repellents. A good way to deter females from nesting is to spray a layer of almond oil/water mixture on any susceptible areas. Do this a few times throughout the spring to discourage bees from nesting. If bees have already taken up residence, you can apply a bit of oil directly to the nesting holes.
- Another strategy to encourage female carpenter bees to relocate is playing music or hanging a wind chime near the nest. The sounds and vibrations are disruptive to the bees and may inspire them to nest elsewhere after a few days of consistent noise.

