



Question of the Week

Q: I have what look like large winged ants swarming in my house. What are they and what should I do?

A: Warm spring temperatures and high moisture levels provide favorable conditions for increased ant and termite activity. Flying ants and swarming termites can be difficult to tell apart.

Ants have a narrow “waist,” but termites have an abdomen broadly joined to the thorax with no waist. Ants have two pair of wings unequal in length (the front pair is longer than the back). Although termites also have two pairs of wings, they are almost equal in length. The antennae of ants are sharply bent in the middle like an elbow, whereas termite antennae are straight and beadlike. Both insects are relatively small, from 3/16 inch to 3/8 inch.

If you discover swarmers inside your home don't panic. Although termite swarms emerging inside a structure usually don't survive, a swarm does usually indicate an infestation. If you have termites, you'll need professional help. Licensed exterminators can examine the structure to determine where the colony is nesting and just how large it is. They have the most effective chemicals and the technical expertise for proper application.

Homeowners who have properly identified the swarmers as carpenter ants can try to combat the problem on their own. For more information about carpenter ants, call the number below, or see our online Carpenter Ant fact sheet at <http://extension.unh.edu/Pubs/HGPubs/CarpAnts.pdf>

Got questions? UNH Cooperative Extension's Family, Home & Garden Education Center Info Line offers practical help finding answers for your lawn and garden questions. Call toll free at 1-877-398-4769, M-F, 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., or Wednesdays, 5:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. You can also email us at answers@unh.edu

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