

Pest Signs and Symptoms



Carpenter Bee Hole



Termite Mud Tubes

Pest Presence

Insects (and other pests) are constantly around us. Their small size and tendency to take shelter in enclosed spaces can cause us to be unaware of their presence. We have the mindset that if we don't actually see the pest, it isn't around. Unfortunately, that's not always the case. By the time many pests are detected, they have already caused some kind of damage. Fortunately, although we may not see the pest, they usually leave signs of their presence. If you know what to look for, you will be more likely to diagnose the pest type and prevent them from building up large populations and causing damage.

Insect Indicators

When dealing with insect pests, there are a number of very obvious signs of presence, and some not so obvious signs. Some obvious signs of pest presence include: wasp or bee nests, fire ant mounds, and predators like hunting spiders. Less obvious signs include: beetle elytra, sawdust, holes, mud tubes, and webbing.

Beetle Elytra –The wings of beetles are different from other insects. They are harder and more protective and are called elytra. When beetle pests are around, you may see pieces of elytra around from beetles that have died. In pest species, these are usually, small, brown, half ovals, and look like part of a nut.

Sawdust – Many insects feed on paper or wood and leave sawdust or a sawdust- like substance near their shelter. These include: termites, certain species of ants and bees, and book/bark lice.

Holes – Certain insects bore holes into structures. Carpenter bees, termites and some beetles for instance, bore characteristic holes in wood.

Mud Tubes – When termites are present in a structure, they create tunnels made out of mud that run along walls.

Webbing – Spider webbing in room and window corners in structures is quite common. Looking at the insects in those webs can indicate if you have a certain species inhabiting that place. You may have an infestation of some kind if you see many of the same kind of insect in webbing around the house.

Rodent Indicators

The presence of rodent pests in a structure is obvious if an animal or its droppings are found. Rodents like mice and rats also cause characteristic damage such as chewing through bags of food which will alert humans to their presence. However, they also create less obvious signs that alert us to their presence. These include: gnawing, burrows, grease marks, paths, sounds and smells.

Gnawing – Rodent gnawing damage is quite common. They are capable of gnawing or chewing through packages of food quite easily and are also capable of chewing through wiring, wooden objects and a number of other materials. Sometimes they even leave teeth marks on places they have gnawed.

Burrows – Some rodents will create burrows along walls, in earth banks or under rubbish or concrete slabs. These will look like small to medium sized holes and they may be in use if you see fresh tracks or freshly dug dirt around the entrance to the hole.

Pathways – Rodents have a limited range that they travel away from their homes. When they do leave their homes, they tend to travel the same pathways. They can make wear marks on carpets and mark visible paths on the ground outside.

Grease marks – Hand in hand with making trails, rodents also tend to run along walls. This is where you should look for trails but also on the walls themselves, rodents will leave grease or dirt marks from where their fur has rubbed against the surface.

Sounds – Even if you don't see rodents, you may hear them. Listen for squeaks, fighting noises, and sounds of running, climbing, or chewing in the walls.

Smells – Smells are probably the hardest non-visible sign to detect but mice and rats have distinct odors. The more familiar you are with these rodents, the easier it is to detect. Any unusual odors in the structure should be investigated to determine if it is being caused by a pest.

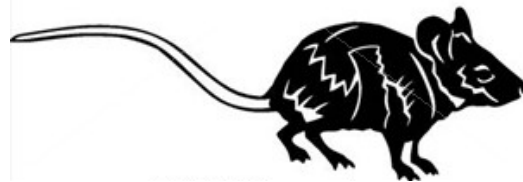
School Implications

Pest prevention in schools is of primary importance. Monitoring for signs and symptoms in the absence of pest sightings can lead to prevention of large pest populations, protecting the health and well being of students.

The larger a pest population grows, the more costly it is to try to manage or eradicate it. Therefore, it is also in a school's best financial interest to be familiar with signs of pests for prevention.



Rodent Gnawing Damage



Rodent Burrow

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