Floral plants are blooming, the busy season for pollinating bees. There are many kinds of bees that pollinate plants, some are solitary like the ground-nesting digger bees and carpenter bees, some are social like honey bees and bumble bees. After a long winter, they come out foraging, mating, and producing.

Buzzing bees benefit plants but cause inconvenience to people having outdoor activities and parties. When seeing a bee around, the first thing comes to people’s mind is “sting”. This is especially true in case of Carpenter bees, for they are robust, about one inch in length and black with markings of yellow hair, and may frighten residents when flying about the faces of people.

However, carpenter bees are generally not aggressive and unable to sting. To be accurate, males do not sting, but females will sting only if handled. It is easy to tell male from female: male bee has a white/light yellow spot on front head, while female does not have this spot.

Carpenter bees excavate galleries in structural timbers such as frames of window and door, wood siding, even, fence, pole, etc. They often fly erratically near such timbers patrolling and guarding their nests. They also buzz around flowering plants to collect pollens. Again, they are not aggressive and are harmless if you leave them alone.

Though they are benefit, they are also destructive through their habit of constructing gallery to hosting brood in exposed wood. A clear sign of carpenter bee infestation is the appearance of circular gallery holes (nearly perfect circle of a penny size) in exposed wood. Such infestation may persist for several years.

Carpenter bees attack many species of dried, seasoned wood but seem to prefer softwoods such as pine, fir, redwood and cedar. They may damage porch and shed ceilings, railings, overhead trim, wooden porch furniture, dead tree limbs, fence posts, wooden shingles, wooden siding, window sills and wooden doors. They prefer unpainted or well-weathered wood to painted or hardwood timbers.

**How to control them?**

Carpenter bees are not attractive to a mixture of lemon dishwashing liquid and water in a container, nor to any sugar-beer liquid. Why? Because they hover around flowering plants to collect pollens to bring back to the galleries in wood to feed their brood, or fly near the wood structures to guard their galleries. They have little interested in liquid regardless of the smell.

Trapping them? Yes. They often mistake penny-sized circular holes as the entry holes to nest galleries. You may construct a wooden box with such holes on side walls and connect a narrow-neck clear container at the bottom. Hanging the trap where populated by bees. When bees enter the box through the holes, they will get into the container that make it hard, if not impossible, to get out. If you a little dishwashing liquid in the container, it will kill the entrapped bees.

If there are only a few hovering around, and you would like an alternative way of excising, you may catch them with an insect net, or knock them out of the air and killed them with a tennis racket. Another effective but hard-to-accomplish control method is to treat the tunnels (galleries) excavated in wood. You may puff an insecticidal dust (e.g., 5 percent carbaryl, Perma-Dust, crusader duster, Drione dust) into the entry hole, or spray aerosol product into it. Then plug the entrance hole with a piece of wooden dowel coated with carpenter's glue, or wood putty, or simply caulk seal the holes. Do not plug the holes immediately, but leave the holes open for a few days after treatment to allow the bees to contact and distribute the insecticide.
throughout the nest galleries. Caution: make the treatment at night when the bees, the females, are not active and wear protective clothing to avoid attack. Females are the ones often hovering around and guarding the holes during the day and will sting when being handled.