

Insects in Firewood

With the changing of the seasons, we look to the imminent future that lies ahead of us, winter. When the winter winds start blowing, we start preparing our wood piles for our winter stoves to heat our homes throughout the long cold winter. When we do start our piles, we need to decide where to pile it for easiest and quickest access to the home. We also need to take into consideration the insect pests that may lie inside those logs of wood.

There are many different insects that may be overwintering in the wood and some others that are using it as a food supply during the winter months. Insects that may be found in the wood you pile for your wood stoves include: bark beetles, termites, carpenter ants, wood boring beetles, and many other insects. These insects may not be active due to the cold winter temperatures, but once inside may become active again, in your home. Typically, they will only be a nuisance pest inside your home because they cannot survive in your home. A few tips to remember when making your wood pile for the winter are to not stack your wood pile directly on the ground and only bring in wood as needed.

The first tip, to not stack your wood pile directly on the ground, is an important reminder for any time of the year. This tip is to avoid termite damage. Termites can get into, and feed on, any type of wood that comes into direct contact with the soil. If you pile wood up against your house with the pile starting directly on the ground, termites can sense the wood pile and work their way through the wood to your home.

You also want to only bring inside the wood that you will be using right away to avoid insects getting into your home and flying around. Wood boring insects will not come out of the wood and begin feeding on your furniture or any other wood material, but they will be moving around in your home, if you let the wood warm up too much. Wood that remains at a temperature of less than 50 degrees Fahrenheit will keep any insects inside of it at a dormant stage, meaning that they will be overwintering with no real action from the insect. If you bring too much wood into your home at a time, the wood will warm up and the insect could emerge from the wood and move around your home. If you bring only a few pieces of wood into your home at a time, you will be placing it into the fire before the insect is able to emerge and it will die in the fire.

Having a fireplace is a wonderful way to warm up and to save money on the heating bills in the winter time. However, we all need to make sure that we are not stacking our wood in a manner that harbors insects and allows them to enter directly into our homes.

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