

Q and A Corner by Lynne Brosch

Q What should I do about a woodpecker that keeps returning to peck at the side of my house? There are already a lot of holes in my siding and the noise is extremely annoying.

A Woodpeckers are drumming in search of food, to establish their breeding territory or possibly to discover a nesting site. In the case of social drumming they are very interested in creating a loud noise which is why you often hear them drumming on metal spouts and gutters. The particular siding most affected will be redwood or cedar especially on older homes and where there are gaps that harbor insects that the birds are searching for. The birds are also most prevalent in areas near the edge of the forest or heavily wooded sites. Woodpeckers are protected so the only method of removal is to deter them in a number of ways. You can use plastic bird netting to cover susceptible areas which in many cases might be the whole side of your house. For a large area you may want to call a professional for help. Many people have used strips of mylar or other such colored strips of plastic hung from the eaves of the house or nearby trees. This method has inconsistent results. Better success has been reported with the application of Tanglefoot, a sticky bird repellent which could be spread over some plywood and attached to the damaged area. This repellent will not trap the birds but only drive them away. Keep in mind that once the woodpecker has established itself on your site it can be very persistent and hard to drive away. Good luck!

For more information read and or download the Pest Notes on Woodpeckers at:
<http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn74124.html>