

ANT CONTROL MADE EASY

Ants are amazing creatures. They have been developing survival strategies for millions of years and were among the first social animals on the earth. It is estimated that there are over 100,000 different species of ants living almost everywhere on earth with the exception of Antarctica. Of these 100,000 different types of ants there are about 55 species that are important as pests in the US. The ants we are concerned with live in small colonies in close association with man, in larger colonies around man-built structures, or have colonies with millions of members effecting our agricultural production. Ants have evolved to exploit almost every food source in almost every environment imaginable. They are so successful that when calculated by weight, they have the largest presence of any animal group on earth.

While ants are a diverse group, they do have things in common. We can use the knowledge of these common biological attributes and behaviors to control them. The most important member of the Ant colony is the “Queen Ant”, she produces all the eggs that grow into larvae, pupae, adult workers and the reproductives that will be necessary to expand or start new colonies. Worker ants are usually sterile females, that maintain the colony, care for the immature ants and the queen, and forage for food.

The ant colony is a very efficient place. The oldest, most expendable workers are sent out to forage for food. This is usually about 10% of the workers. These foraging ants will wander around their environment until they locate a food source. Once they find a food source, they will take some of that food back to colony to recruit other workers to help harvest that food source. They leave chemical trails to help other workers to find their way to the new food source.

Ants can be very selective in the foods they bring back to the colony, most ants will feed on carbohydrates most of the year, but some prefer protein and still others prefer fats. Feeding preferences can change based on the time of year or the current needs of the colony. It is even possible for feeding preferences to change from hour to hour.

Ant control strategies that rely on the use of residual sprays, usually fail. The sprays are effective at killing the foraging workers, but the sun and rain break these chemicals down and a new “crop” of workers takes over for the ones that were killed. Ants can forage large distances searching for food, so it is often difficult to apply chemicals directly to the colony. In addition, sprays leave residues that can effect people, non-target animals and they may eventually end up in the air we breathe, the food we eat or the water we drink.

Ant control strategies that rely on baits use the ant’s natural behaviors of harvesting food in the environment and bringing it back to colony to help destroy the colony. But this strategy is only effective if the toxic agent in the bait works slowly enough to make its way into the colony to eliminate the queen.

Baiting strategies of the past have failed because:

1. The baits are targeted at only one species of ant (fire ant), which may have feeding preferences different from the general ant population
2. The baits are too strong and kill too many workers, before sufficient bait makes its way into the colony to kill the queen.
3. The baits are not available in sufficient amounts to work their way into the colony to kill the queen.

Utilizing the latest University research on ant behavior and feeding preferences, we have designed a program that works. Recent University research tells us that:

1. Most of the common pest ants have their main nests outside of man-built structures
2. Ants are lazy, they will take the closest food source to their nest
3. Ants like to be efficient, they prefer their food source in discrete areas and not spread out over their foraging range
4. That given food sources of equivalent nutrient value, Ants prefer a liquid food over a gel, a gel over a granule, and a granule over a solid
5. Boron, (the active component in Disodium Octaborate Tetrahydrate) is more effective than Hydramethylnon or Abemectin at killing the queen ants.

Ant Control can be “Made Easy”; if you look at the infestation you have and treat it with the appropriate baiting system. Ant infestations can be broken up into 3 levels of severity.

1. Level 1- Small Infestations
We consider the infestation “Small”, if there are only a few dozen to a few hundred ants seen foraging.
2. Level 2- Moderate Infestation
We consider the infestations “Moderate”, if there are a hundred to several hundred ants seen foraging.
3. Level 3- Large infestation
We consider the infestations “Large”, if there are several hundred to many thousands of ants foraging.

Treatment Recommendations:

1. Sanitation- It is important to remove as many sources of food and water for the ants as possible. Remove organic material such as pet food, dirty dishes and leaking faucets. Seal up cracks around windows and doorways. Remove vegetation and branches that are within 12 inches of the house. Stack firewood and landscaping materials away from the building.
2. Treat “Level 1” or “Level 2” infestations with Gourmet Ant Bait Gel and Gourmet Ant Bait Liquid. Place the bait in cracks or crevices where ants are seen or in Ant Café Refillable Bait Stations. Replace bait as needed. The Gel bait offers a quick kill and you will see results in 2 to 24 hours. You can supplement this treatment with Gourmet Liquid Ant Bait in Ant & Roach Café RTU bait stations under cabinets, on interior and exterior window sills and around the outside perimeter. In heavier infestations concentrate most of your efforts on the outside perimeter. Placing baits in the house may attract additional ants into the house.
3. Treat “Level 3” infestations with Gourmet Liquid Ant Bait around the outside of the structure or infested area. You can use “Antopia Bait Stations”, Ant & Roach Café RTU Disposable Bait Stations” or for really severe infestations or in instances where you want to maintain a defensive perimeter, use the “AntPro” Bait Dispensing System. Some species of Ants, such as Argentine Ant in California have such large colonies that they consume up to 12 ounces of liquid bait in a night. It is therefore necessary to monitor your bait placement closely for the first week, to make sure there is sufficient bait available to eliminate the colony.

Patience is a real virtue when it comes to ant control. We want the bait to act slowly, so that it works its way all the way to the queen and eliminates the colony. No matter how tempting it may be. Please refrain from spraying the ants you see with chemicals. While this may give you temporary satisfaction, it will slow down the process of ant elimination.

If you will follow the steps outlined above and use the products as directed, we know you will be satisfied with this "Easy" Method of ant Elimination.



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