



# The Do's & Don'ts Of Ant Control



Ants have had 10s of millions of years to evolve a strategy that optimizes their ability to exploit their environment, survive and reproduce. Their foraging strategies are so efficient that scientists are modeling their behavior to make computers run more efficiently. If we are to win the war and protect our customer's property, we must make the most of the weapons we have at our disposal. The most important weapon we have is knowledge. The most important tool we have to control ants is our brain. So, let's review the latest scientific thinking on ant control.

## The Do's

- Become familiar with the identification and habits of the common pest ants in your area, especially their foraging and nesting behavior. Use a "pictorial ant key" to aid in identification.
- Be prepared when you come to your customer's property with all the tools you need to make a thorough inspection.
- Inspect the property thoroughly- identify ants, ant trails, potential entryways; food, water and nesting sites (don't forget to inspect trees and shrubs for aphids, scales, and other "honeydew"-producing insects.
- Identify areas where customer cooperation is needed. Communicate to them the what, where and why of the actions that are needed.
- Develop a plan to control the ants using; sealing, trimming, elimination of water sources, direct treatment of nests, nesting sites, and the treatment of plants to eliminate "honeydew" producing insects and baits.
- Make many small placements around the structure with different types of baits inside "Ant Cafes<sup>®</sup>" to determine the ant's food preference and colony location. Concentrate your placements near water sources, windows and potential entryways.
- After determining the ants preferences and areas of greatest activity, make a larger placement and bait for control with the "Antopia<sup>®</sup> Bait Station".
- Bait for ants outside the structure. Studies show that even if ants are nesting in the structure they can be drawn outside with baits.
- When using dry baits, place water nearby to enhance feeding activity.
- Keep sufficient bait available until the colony is eliminated especially during the first 2-3 weeks.
- Keep alternative baits available in case feeding preferences change.

## The Don'ts

- Don't promise immediate results- quick fixes like broadcast spraying will only harvest the foragers (usually less than 10% of the colony) and the problem will return in a short period of time.
- Don't treat every house the same- you need to identify the ant so that you know how to treat and where to treat.
- Don't count on residual chemicals to do the whole job- overuse of residuals can cause a colony to "bud" into several colonies and can seal a colony in the house.
- Don't rely on just one bait- gel baits are quick and easy to use but dry out too quickly and often just harvest the foragers- feeding preferences can change by the hour.
- Store your bait and bait stations away from repellent chemicals. If you smoke, keep baits and bait stations away from nicotine in the air and on your hands. Don't let your baits or bait stations get sprayed with chemicals (yours or the customers).
- Don't be impatient- baits can take several weeks to work and even months- depending on the size of the colony.
- Don't place liquid and dry baits in the same bait station- the confined humidity will cause the dry bait to mold quickly.
- Don't waste money- Use and reuse bait stations. The "Ant Cafes<sup>®</sup>" and "Antopia<sup>®</sup> Bait Station" are the most cost effective professional bait stations available and they keep bait fresher longer.

