



Pests & Insects- ANTS

Brief

Ants are the most frequent and persistent pests encountered around homes and buildings. Besides being a nuisance, ants contaminate food, build unsightly mounds on our property, and cause structural damage by hollowing out wood for nesting. Species such as fire ants inflict painful stings, which can be life-threatening to hypersensitive individuals.

Step 1. Ant Management

Ant management requires diligent efforts and the combined use of mechanical, cultural, sanitation, and often chemical control methods. It is unrealistic and impractical to attempt to totally eliminate ants from an outdoor area. Focus your management efforts on excluding ants from buildings or valuable plants and eliminating their food and water sources. Reducing outdoor sources of ants near buildings will reduce the likelihood of ants coming indoors.

The mistake most people make when attempting to control ants is only spraying the ones they see. This approach usually fails because the ants seen foraging over exposed surfaces is only a small portion of the colony. Typically, there will be thousands of additional ants including one or more egg-laying queens hidden somewhere in a nest. Eliminating queens and other colony members within nests is often the key to effective ant control.

Step 2. Ant Identification

To most householders, all ants look pretty much alike. In truth, dozens of different species occur around homes and buildings, each having unique characteristics which may influence the method of control

a. Odorous House Ant

The odorous house ant has become the most common and difficult ant species to control in Florida and throughout much of the United States. The ant is small (1/8-inch), darkish, and forms distinct trails along outdoor and indoor surfaces. Odorous house ants emit what's been described as a rotten coconut or pine scent when crushed with a finger and sniffed.

b. Pavement Ant

Pavement ants are more likely to displace bits of soil from their typical nesting location under sidewalks, driveways and other paved areas. The ant is a little bit larger than the odorous ant and is usually dark brown to black.

c. Southern Fire Ant

Southern Fire Ant workers vary from 1/8 to 1/4 inch, they have an amber head and thorax, black abdomen and golden hairs cover the body. They are usually found outside or on plants brought in from the outside.

Step 3. Deciding what control method to use

a. Spray

Spraying won't provide permanent control, because it kills only foraging ants without killing the colony and the queens. Typically the foragers represent only a small proportion of the colony. On occasion, barrier sprays make the situation worse by trapping ants indoors. Perimeter treatments may appear to knock down the population, but ants will quickly build back up and invade again.



Pests & Insects- ANTS

b. Bait

Ant baits contain insecticides mixed with materials that attract worker ants looking for food. Baits are a key tool for managing ants indoors and the only type of insecticide recommended in most situations. Ants are attracted to the bait and carry small portions of the bait back to the nest where it is transferred mouth to mouth to other workers, larvae, and queens to kill the entire colony. Bait products must be slow-acting so that the foraging ants have time to make their way back to the nest and feed other members of the colony before they are killed. When properly used, baits are more effective and safer than sprays. Use baits primarily outdoors for indoor ants. Use indoors only if there is a serious infestation and you can't find the spot where ants are entering the building; otherwise you could attract ants indoors. Placing baits outdoors draws ants out of buildings. Place bait stations where ants can easily find them, but avoid placing them in areas that are accessible to pets and small children

c. Granular

To try to achieve long-term control, some pest control companies offer every-other-month perimeter spray programs. Perimeter treatments pose more risk of environmental upset than baits in bait stations and are less effective than a bait-based IPM program. Because of water quality concerns, the State of Florida has recently adopted regulations limiting the use of perimeter treatments with pyrethroid insecticides.

Step 4. Choosing the correct product

Type	Best for	Active Ingredient	Product Name	Comment
Bait	Odorous Ant	Borate based products	Terro Ant Killer II	
		Borate based products	Drax SF Ant Gel	
	Pavement Ant	Fipronil	Combat Quick Kill 3	
		Fipronil	MaxForce FC	
	Southern Fire Ant	Abametin	Enforcer Ant Max	
		Abametin	Raid Ant Baits II	
Granular	Odorous Ant			
	Pavement Ant	Bifenthrin	Talstar	
	Southern Fire Ant	Indoxacarb	Advion	
		Imidaclopid	Merit	
Spray	Odorous Ant		Raid Ant Killer	
	Pavement Ant		Raid Ant Kill	
	Southern Fire Ant	Acephate	Orthene	
		Imidaclopid	Bounty	