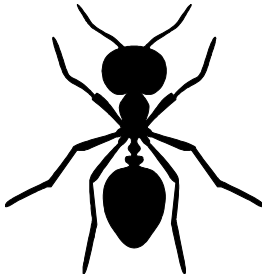


Home Grounds Fact Sheet

Ants: A Common Household Pest



There are few insects more persistently exasperating to housekeepers than ants. Ants come in several sizes and different colors. Some of these pests are: Acrobat ant, black carpenter ant, little black ant, little fire ant, odorous house ant, Pharaoh ant, red harvester and the little thief ant. Any or all of

these ants may be found in or around the house.

Another insect that is commonly confused with ants are termites. These two insects, however, may be readily distinguished. Ants are constricted, or 'pinched in' at the waistline, while termites have no constriction in the waistline. Also, the rear wings of an ant are considerably smaller than the front wings, and often are attached to them. There is little difference in the size between the rear and front wings of the termite.

Beneficial Aspects of Ants:

Ants are useful to man as tireless scavengers that help to reduce dead and decaying organic materials. Ants can and will eat almost anything. The food of ants is even more varied than that of man. Various species eat particles of human foods - sweets, melon, seeds, fats and meats, as well as dead insects, roots of vegetables, and fungi, which they grow in their nests.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

Considerations

IPM is a common sense approach to pest control and plant care. It employs a number of measures to prevent, control or reduce problems. Always use the least toxic methods first. A good mechanical control, in many instances, is to vacuum the insects and then throw the bag away. Regarding household pests, in addition to regular house-cleaning, the best preventive method is to monitor the home, i.e. note any cracks in foundations, air spaces between windows and frames, poorly-fitting doors, moisture from leaks, etc., and correct such examples/situations.

How to Control Ants:

Locate the nest, if possible. It may be outdoors, or it may be in the house within a wall or partition, under flooring, under a pile of papers, or in an out-of-the-way corner. You may be able to trace the ants' line of march from the food source to the approximate location of the nest. Since most species of ants nest outdoors and invade the home, it is often necessary to extend the operation around the foundation and to the adjacent lawn. If you find the nest, treat with an insecticide labeled for use against ants. Every effort should be made to locate the point of entry. For a general application where an access cannot be found, apply control materials as a dust or liquid drench to 3 foot barrier along the building's exterior foundation.

Apply these materials with a special "straw-like" aerosol applicator called a crack and crevice treatment. By using this extended nozzle, the insecticide application is directed into the cracks and crevices of baseboards, door sills and window frames, where ants crawl through and make their way into the home. Be sure all unnecessary openings are permanently sealed off with plaster, caulk, silicone, etc. This is a permanent and far superior concept than reliance on a chemical material and should be used wherever possible.

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