

PEST CONTROL BULLETIN NO. 1

ANTS



Flying Ant
(Reproductive)



Worker Ants



Flying Termite



GENERAL INFORMATION

Ants are common household pests that also may damage lawns, gardens, fruits, and nuts. They are often classified as to their feeding habits—sweet feeding ants, grease ants, and plant feeding ants such as harvester ants, fire ants, and carpenter ants. These ants occasionally may feed on dead insects and honeydew produced by aphids (plant lice).

DESCRIPTION

Ants are often mistaken for termites. However, adult termites have an abdomen that is broadly joined to the thorax, instead of being restricted (thin waisted) as with ants. Adult ants vary in size and are generally wingless with the exception of winged reproductives. Soon after mating, the males die and the females or "queens" lose their wings and establish new colonies.

HABITS & DAMAGE

Being social insects, they are found nearly everywhere living in colonies or "nests" that are built in either open ground, under stones, or in wood. Nesting habits vary according to the species, temperature, moisture, and proximity to food. All species have nests where the eggs are deposited and young are reared to adults. The adults travel out from the nests, often in trails, in search of food to be taken back to the nest to feed the developing young (larvae). Some species accompany aphids, scale, and other insects which secrete honeydew. Ants are attracted to the nectar of flowers as well as bits of food found in their environment. Some species of ants, including fire ants and harvester ants, can deliver a painful sting.

CONTROL

There are effective methods and chemicals available for the control of ants. When purchasing a pesticide to control ants, please examine the label to be sure that it includes the words "for the control of ants." It also is important to note the active ingredient in the product and the type of formulation you are purchasing. It is important to follow all instructions printed on the label *to the letter*.

When you discover ants either inside or outside the home, attempt locating the colony (nest) by tracing the ants back to their source. The ants' line of march frequently can be followed from the food source to the approximate location of the nest.

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In the event that pesticides are not appropriate or are ineffective in controlling the ants, it is recommended that you contact a professional entomologist who specializes in the control of insects, mites, and other arthropod pests. Entomologists with this expertise are employed by the local agricultural commissioner or a reputable pest control company. Insecticides may be purchased at nurseries, hardware, farm supply, and pet stores.

