

Q&A Summary from Controlling Ants Around the Home Webinar

Ant Identification

UC IPM's ant key for identification: <http://ipm.ucanr.edu/TOOLS/ANTKEY/?src=webinar> If you are able to capture the ants, you can provide a specimen to bring to your local UC Cooperative Extension office for assistance with identification or provide a sample to a pest management professional. Capture the ants and store in rubbing alcohol or in the freezer to kill and preserve the specimen.

Argentine Ants

Argentine ants generally nest outdoors. The workers are of uniform size and multiple queens and subcolonies may be present. Focus on keeping ants out of the house and making your home less attractive to ants. Use baits to control the ant colony. For more information on Argentine ants: <http://ipm.ucanr.edu/TOOLS/ANTKEY/argentine.html?src=webinar>

Bait Stations

Proper identification of the ant species is important to select the right type of bait. While ants have preferences for sugar or protein, they will sometimes eat both. When using bait stations, be sure to read the label. The label includes instructions on placement and frequency of replacement for effective control. The target ant species should be mentioned on the label for best results.

Bee Hives

When managing ants around beehives, keep hives raised and cover the bee stand with a barrier like Tanglefoot to prevent ants from accessing the hive.

Diatomaceous Earth

For ant management, silica gel or silicon dioxide is more effective than diatomaceous earth because it is better able to penetrate the cuticle of the insect exoskeleton. When using diatomaceous earth, take necessary precautions around children, pets and nontargets. Always read the label prior to use. Apply the dust to cracks and crevices and hard-to-reach spaces such as under the stove and fridge. Do not allow insecticide dust to pile up carpets and floor it may actually repel the insects.

Benefits of Ants

All organisms in the world are part of our ecosystem so essentially every living thing has a place, whether they are food for another animal or eat other animals and plants. Ants are scavengers but can also eat insect eggs in the soil. They can also help aerate the soil.

Winged Ants

Most winged forms of ants leave the nest in large numbers in warm weather to mate and establish new colonies. Argentine ants are an exception; queens mate inside the nest. See this reference on our website to help distinguish winged ants from termites:

<http://ipm.ucanr.edu/TOOLS/ANTKEY/antid3.html?src=webinar>

Red Imported Fire Ants

In addition to RIFA, there is a native fire ant in California. A single red imported fire ant can bite and sting its victim repeatedly. Search online for information on sting relief. See our Pest Notes: Red Imported Fire Ant for more information:

<http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7487.html?src=webinar>

Finding Ants Indoors

Ants will generally come indoors for food or shelter. Their presence may be increased after a rain event or in extreme heat.

Pesticides

When managing ants with pesticides, be sure to read the label of registered pesticides for home use on ants. Homemade pesticides or off-label use of pesticides can be dangerous to your health. See this article for more information about the dangers of homemade pest control remedies: <https://ucanr.edu/blogs/blogcore/postdetail.cfm?postnum=46532?src=webinar>

Continued use of the same pesticide active ingredient (borates, avermectin, fipronil, etc) can lead to resistance to that material. It's good to vary the pesticide used for a pest. The main thing to consider is why you have the pest and what nonchemical practices can you do (such as exclusion) to reduce or limit ants getting to where you don't want them.

Cultural Controls for Ants

Cultural controls are ways to manage pests by changing our behavior. This can include cleaning countertops, wiping up ant trails, sweeping or vacuuming crumbs, storing attractive foods in airtight containers, etc. Ants often tend aphids and other sap-sucking insects in landscapes to feed on honeydew produced by these insects. This extra food source helps ants to grow their colony exponentially. One can prevent ant infestations by managing landscape pests and starving the ant colonies. These practices can be done before ants are a problem, or to remedy a problem.

Management Outdoors

Ant management in gardens and landscapes requires different approaches to management indoors. See this resource on our website for more information:

<http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/GARDEN/CONTROLS/antmanagement.html?src=webinar>

More Information on Ants

Ants Information Page: <http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/invertebrates/links.ants.html?src=webinar>

Pest Notes Ants: <http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7411.html?src=webinar>

Pest Notes Carpenter Ants: <http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7416.html?src=webinar>

Pest Notes Red Imported Fire Ant:

<http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7487.html?src=webinar>

Contact Us:

Siavash Taravati

staravati@ucanr.edu

<http://urbanipmsocal.com/ipm/>