

Ants

Although ants are annoying when they come indoors, they can be beneficial by feeding on fleas, termites, and other pests in the garden.

While spraying chemicals inside the house may seem effective, it won't prevent more ants from entering your home because most ants live outdoors. Instead, focus efforts on keeping ants from entering buildings. Combine several methods such as caulking entryways, cleaning up food sources, and baiting when necessary. Avoid the use of pyrethroids (e.g. bifenthrin and cypermethrin), especially on hard surfaces such as driveways, sidewalks, or around the foundation of buildings. These products pollute waterways.

Make your house less attractive to ants.

- ◆ Caulk cracks and crevices that provide entry into the house.
- ◆ Store attractive food in closed containers.
- ◆ Clean up grease and spills.
- ◆ Ant-proof kitchen garbage pails with sticky barriers such as petroleum jelly under the lip and place pet dishes in a moat of water.
- ◆ Remove or manage sweet food sources next to your house such as aphid-infested bushes and ripened fruit on trees.
- ◆ Keep plants, grass, and organic mulch at least a foot away from the foundation of buildings to reduce ant foraging and nesting.

When ants invade your house:

- ◆ Sponge-up invading ants with soapy water as soon as they enter.
- ◆ Plug up ant entryways with caulk.
- ◆ Take infested potted plants outdoors and submerge pots in a solution of insecticidal soap and water.
- ◆ Clean up food sources by wiping up spills or placing food in tight-fitting containers.
- ◆ Rely on outdoor baits to control the ant colony.
- ◆ Insecticide sprays should not be necessary.
- ◆ If you hire a pest control company, ask them to use baits rather than perimeter treatments or monthly sprays.



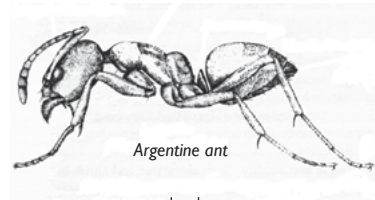
How baits work:

Pesticide baits attract worker ants so they will take it back to the nest where the entire colony, including queens, may be killed. The pesticide must be slow acting so workers won't be killed before they get back to the nest.

How to use baits:

Place baits near ant trails and nest openings. Pre-packaged or refillable bait stations or stakes are safest and easiest to use. Active ingredients in baits may include boric acid/borate, fipronil, avermectin, sulfluramid, hydramethylnon, or arsenic trioxide. Replace baits when empty and reposition them, or try a different bait product if ants don't appear to be taking it. It may take 5 to 10 days to see fewer ants.

**For more information, refer to
Pest Notes: Ants at
www.ipm.ucdavis.edu.**



Actual size $1/8$ of an inch.

Minimize the use of pesticides that pollute our waterways. Use nonchemical alternatives or less toxic pesticide products whenever possible. Read product labels carefully and follow instructions on proper use, storage, and disposal.

For more information about managing pests, contact your **University of California Cooperative Extension office** listed under the county government pages of your phone book or the UC IPM Web site at www.ipm.ucdavis.edu.



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affects our rivers, and oceans!**