

Ants

Ants are one of the most prevalent pests in California. 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, which is essential for control because most ants nest outside. Focus management efforts on excluding ants from buildings or valuable plants.

Make your house less attractive to ants:

- ◆ Caulk cracks and crevices that provide entry inside.
- ◆ Store attractive food in closed containers.
- ◆ Clean up grease and spills.
- ◆ Look for and remove indoor nesting sites, such as inside potted plants.
- ◆ Ant-proof kitchen garbage pails with sticky barriers such as petroleum jelly under the lip and pet dishes by placing them in a moat of water.
- ◆ Remove sweet food sources next to your house such as aphid-infested bushes and ripened fruit on trees.

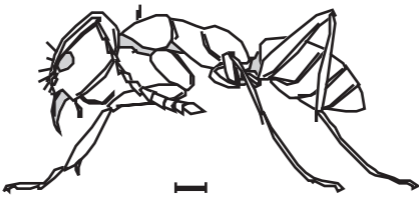
When ants invade your house, take these steps:

- ◆ Sponge invaders with soapy water as soon as they enter.
- ◆ Plug up ant entryways with caulk or petroleum jelly.
- ◆ Remove infested potted plants.
- ◆ Clean up food sources.
- ◆ Rely on baits to control the ant colony.
- ◆ Indoor sprays are not usually necessary.



How and why baits work best:

When using bait, place it along ant trails and at nest openings. Worker ants will be attracted to bait and take it back to the nest where the entire colony, including queens, may be killed. The bait must be slow-acting so workers won't be killed before they get back to the nest. It may take several weeks for results to be evident. Just killing workers foraging in your home or garden does little to control the colony, because as few as one percent of a colony's foraging worker ants are able to provide sufficient food to support nestbound queens and larvae. Baits in bait stations or ant stakes are easiest to use and safest for the environment.



(actual size)

–PROTECT YOUR WATER–

To eliminate runoff to storm drains and protect our creeks, rivers and the ocean, minimize the use of pesticides and follow proper use and disposal practices. Whenever possible, use non-chemical alternatives or less toxic pesticide products.

For more information, contact the University of California Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners of Orange County Hotline: (714) 708-1646 or ucmastergardeners@yahoo.com or visit www.uccemg.org and www.ipm.ucdavis.edu.



What you use in your garden affects our creeks, lakes, and rivers!