

WHEN ANTS INVAD E...

HERE'S HOW TO KEEP THEM AWAY WITHOUT THE SPRAY:

Outside Your Home

There are so many ants outside that it's impractical to try to get rid of them. Instead, it's more effective to concentrate on preventing ants from coming inside and on keeping them away from the house.

- Caulk holes in the building where ants might get in. If you work on this a little at a time, you will eventually have far fewer ant invasions.
- Put weather-stripping on doors and windows.
- Keep your garbage can and recycling bins clean, and if possible, move them away from your house.
- Clean recyclables before storing them.



• Use ant baits because they contain a minimum of pesticide and confine it to a small area. Place baits where you see ant trails going into the house. Choose outdoor baits



that contain boric acid, borax, fipronil, hydramethylnon, or arsenic as the active ingredient (look for this on the label). Remove the bait when the ant trail disappears so you don't attract more ants to the spot. (See Tips for Using Ant Baits).

In the Garden

Ants feed on the sweet excretions of pest insects like aphids, scales, and mealybugs that live on some plants. To protect their food source, ants fight off the natural enemies of these pests. Without natural enemies, the pest population can grow to annoying numbers. You can often solve an aphid, scale, or mealybug problem by simply excluding ants from the plant and allowing the natural enemies to do their job.

- Exclude ants from bushes or trees by using a sticky barrier around the trunk. Be sure to trim any branches that touch walls, fences, or other plants so ants can't find an alternate route onto the plant.
- If a sticky barrier doesn't work, try placing bait at the base of the plant. Protect the bait from sprinklers with an overturned plastic container.
- Use less-toxic insecticidal soap or oil sprays to control the insects that are attracting the ants.
- Consider moving plants that are growing close to the house and that may be attracting ants.

Inside Your Home

- Keep things clean. Empty the trash daily during ant season.
- Keep food in containers that seal tightly.
- Kill single ants you find walking around the kitchen. These are scouts that will call in the hordes if they find a tasty tidbit.

- Caulk cracks and crevices in baseboards, cupboards, walls, etc.
- Wipe up ant trails with soapy water or vacuum them up. Ants will die in the dust of the vacuum bag.
- Use ant baits when ants invade. Remove the bait when the trail disappears so you don't attract more ants.

Tips for Using Ant Baits

Ant baits contain a small amount of pesticide mixed with an attractive food substance. Ants take bait back to their nest to share with their nest mates. In this way the entire nest can sometimes be eliminated.

- Use baits with boric acid, borax, fipronil, hydramethylnon, or arsenic as the active ingredient (look for this on the label).
- Keep several different baits on hand because ants change their food preferences frequently. If one bait isn't working, try another.

Wait several days to see if they take the bait before switching to a different type.

- Don't spray insecticide around the



bait; it will repel the ants.

- Don't use baits outside when it's raining.
- When ants are gone, remove the bait so you don't attract more ants.
- Baits may take several weeks to kill the ants. At first you may see more ants coming to the bait, but after a few days to a week you should see a significant reduction.

PRODUCTS

Examples of trade names of products listed in this fact sheet:
Sticky Barrier: Tanglefoot® or Stickem® Tree Pest Barrier
Baits containing Boric Acid or Borax: Terro® Ant Killer II, Enforcer® Ant Bait
Baits containing Hydramethylnon: Combat® Ant Control System
Baits containing Fipronil: Combat® Quick Kill Formula for Ants
Baits containing Arsenic: Grants® Kills Ants
No endorsement of specific brand names is intended, nor is criticism implied of similar products not mentioned.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Bio-Integral Resource Center (BIRC) (510) 524-2567 website: www.birc.org
University of California Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners in your area (in the phone book)
Central Contra Costa Sanitary District website: www.centalsan.org
University of California IPM website: www.ipm.ucdavis.edu

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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WHAT ARE ANTS GOOD FOR?

Did you know that ants are some of nature's best sanitary engineers? They aerate the soil and recycle all kinds of dead animal and plant material.

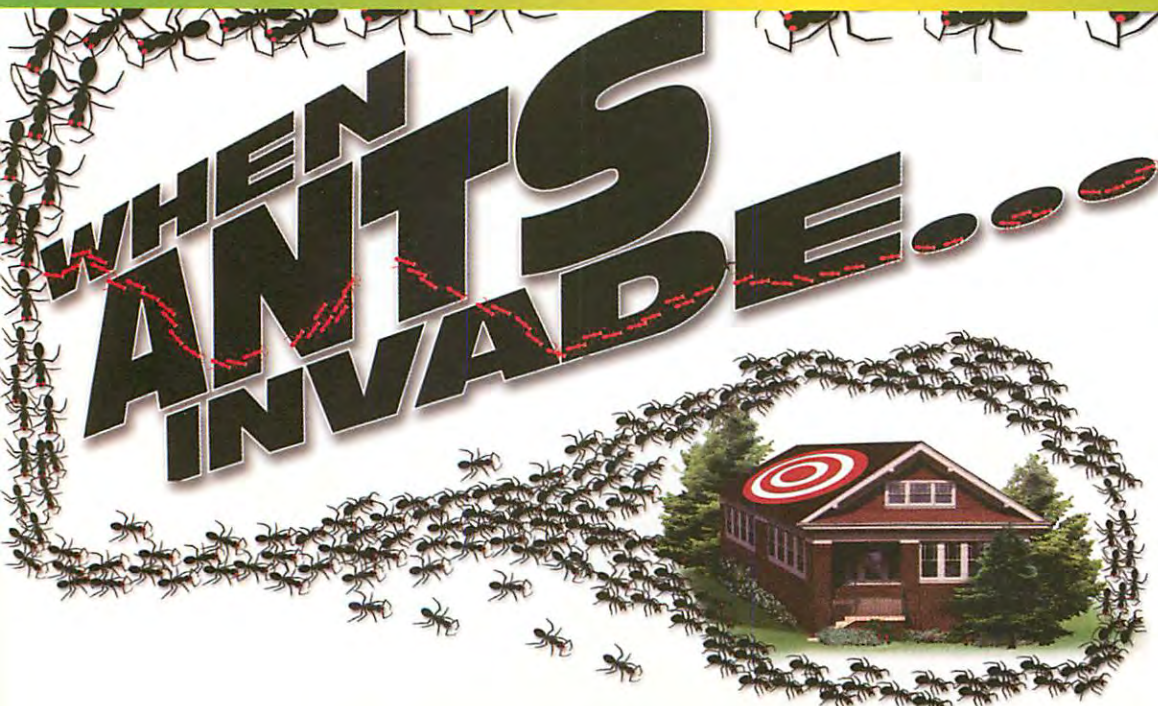
PESTICIDES AND THE BAY

Pesticides are poisons that kill pests, but they can also harm people, pets, and other creatures in our environment. Pesticides applied around the outside of your home can be washed into storm drains by rain and sprinklers. These pesticides end up polluting creeks, the Delta, the Ocean, and the Bay which destroys the environment for our children and future generations.

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SEE INSIDE FOR DETAILS