

Controlling Ants in the Home

By Paul T. McCoy

Ants play an important role in the environment but they are considered pests when they invade the house. They damage clothes and furniture by creating holes in them and they also contaminate food. Ants enter the house in search for water, food and shelter. Getting rid of them effectively may need one or two methods.

Ants are one of the most common and frequent insects inside the house. Homeowners find them really annoying and irritating because they cause harm and damage on persons and in the properties and home structures. In reality, there are various type of species of ants that enter your home. Each type of ants have different characteristics and may require different approach in controlling them. The common house ant that invade the home are pharaoh ants or carpenter ants. To identify what type of ants you have in your home, get a few ant samples in a piece of plastic and then seek the help of an expert or pest control firm.



Pharaoh Ant



Carpenter Ant

It is very frustrating to control ants in the home. You should distinguish the type of ants in your home and know how to control them. You must also be aware of when to seek professional help in dealing with your ant problems. Ants are considered social insects and who live together. A group of ants is called a colony. One colony may have hundreds to millions of members depending on the specie. Each colony has different ant personalities with different roles and responsibilities. Each colony has a queen that lay eggs. Other members are the “worker ants” that work to get food for the group.

In searching for food, they follow a certain trail that they follow to and from their “home”. Winged ants are call “swarmers”, they are the ones responsible to mate are able to create a new colony. When a swarmer goes out of the nest, it means that there are eggs inside the house. Swarmers may look the same as termites but they somehow differ in looks and characteristics. Ants have small waists while termites have the same width from head to below. The wings of ants are different in sizes - front wings are bigger than the hind wings while in termites, all wings have the same size. Also, ants’ antennae are bent while it is straight on termites.



Ants can be totally eliminated by spraying pesticides in their nests - killing the queens and workers inside. It is not effective to just only spray the visible ants that are marching on your walls or kitchen surfaces. Ants’ nests are usually found behind walls and doors, furniture, appliances, kitchen and cabinets. It is sometimes hard to find their nests because their homes are hidden. Installing baits can help eliminate them and find their nests. One advantage of using baits is that ants may bring the bait in their nests causing harm to ants that are in the nests including the queens and workers. There are readily available ant baits that are sold in the market, hardware or grocery stores. Put the baits where the ants go. If their trail is visible, it is best to put the bait near the trail. Do not spray pesticides near the bait because ants may smell it and will avoid going to the bait. Likewise, if the ants are already eating the baits, avoid spraying them too so that they will eat the bait and bring some in their nests which may also destroy other ants.

Ants may also nest outside the house. Try to look for their nests and eliminate it too. You can also use bait outside the house near the ants’ trail.

Other well-known methods of eliminating the ants in your home is by using cinnamons, catnips, dish washing soap, vinegar, black pepper, bay leaves, whole cloves, and mint leaves. If you are not familiar of these, try to research them on the net and see how they work.

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