

Managing Fire Ants

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FIRE ANTS DON'T BITE, THEY STING!

FIRE ANTS DON'T GET FAT ON INSECTICIDES

Fire ants are omnivorous. They commonly eat plants, animal material, and live and dead insects, including ticks and cockroaches. Fire ants choose nourishment that provides protein fat or carbohydrates; the oils found in other insects, worms, and seeds are favorable sources. The ants are capable of consuming only liquids; solids must be torn up and digested in liquid form. Within a fire ant colony, the oldest ants, which make up more than 20 percent of

the population, are the food hunters. They will search for food up to 100 feet from their mound. Live insects will be stung by the domineering fire ant and brought back to the ant colony for dispersion as food among hungry workers and the growing larva.

HOW TO FIGHT FIRE ANTS AND WIN

The increase of fire ant infestations in the southern United States has prompted consumers to seek serious fire ant control. There currently are several treatments on the market that claim fire ant control, many of which provide either unsatisfactory or no results. Application of such products also is a concern among consumers who are looking for a solution to their fire ant problems. Many applications are labor intensive, require multiple applications each season, are

neither curative nor preventative, and require all mounds be located and treated.

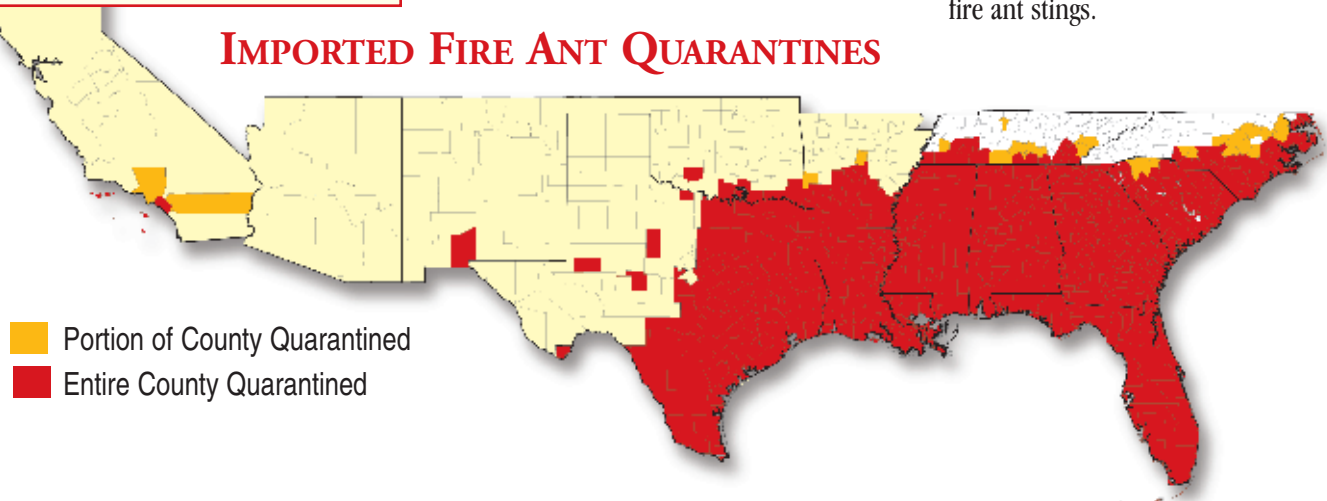
Fipronil satisfies consumer demand providing season-long control guaranteed with only one application. Fipronil cannot be detected by fire ants; it is carried back to the mound and passed through the colony and to the queen ant via ingestion. Fipronil, the active ingredient in Over 'n Out® Fire Ant Killer, is available in a dust-free granular formulation for drop spreaders or broadcast treatment and can be found in retail lawn and garden stores. Fipronil provides both curative and preventative treatments, achieving complete control in four to six weeks. Consumers respond favorably to the dust- and odor-free granular, which makes applying it much easier than baits and contact insecticides. Broadcasting the application ensures treatment over the entire yard while minimizing injuries resulting from hunting for mounds and treating them individually which encourages fire ant stings.

QUARANTINES

Fire ants spread easily within the states. To prevent further infestation, federal quarantines have been created to restrict the movement of items potentially carrying fire ants including soil, potted plants, plants with soil attached, grass sod, hay, and used soil-moving equipment. To move an item from an infested area of the states to an area free of infestation requires a certification.



IMPORTED FIRE ANT QUARANTINES



FIRST AID TREATMENT FOR FIRE ANT STINGS

Fire ants swarm on people and animals for sometimes more than 10 seconds before they sting. If disturbed, many ants will attack and sting numerous times each and will continue to do so even after their venom sac is emptied. A fire ant will grip with its jaws onto its prey, arch its back and insert its stinger injecting venom from the poisonous sac. After a fire ant stings, you will feel a burning sensation, itching, and during the following 24 hours white pustule will form on the skin. Only imported fire ant stings will result in pustules.

Treating a fire ant sting:

- Cover the sting with ice, a cold cloth, or begin a “10 minutes on and 10 minutes off” procedure with an ice pack. This will reduce swelling and minimize pain.
- Wash the area that was stung with soapy water without puncturing the pustule. Infections are common if the

skin/pustule is broken which may lead to permanent scars. Large swellings can be expected by the sting and can be treated with appropriate antihistamines and corticosteroids from a doctor. This will prevent irritation on the surrounding area.

- For those who experience a more serious reaction to the sting or are commonly allergic to insect bites and stings, medical attention should be sought immediately.

Systemic allergic reaction to the insect venom is called anaphylaxis. While the stings are not typically life threatening, some 20 to 40 people will die this year from the ant’s venom this year. Allergic reactions to fire ant stings can be expected by 5 percent of the United States population; they are serious and require immediate medical attention. Life-threatening anaphylactic reactions deserving of the attention include difficulty breathing/swallowing, nausea, hive breakout, severe headache, dizziness, or a comatose state. An individual

experiencing any of these symptoms should be prepared to go to the emergency room where they will receive prescribed medications and appropriate treatment.

A preventative action for individuals prone to an allergic reaction is immunotherapy which provides a protection against insect venom. If an allergy to insect venom is known, a self-injectable form of epinephrine should be carried by the allergic person at all times; epinephrine reverses the symptoms of anaphylaxis.

To avoid contact with fire ants and to prevent fire ant stings the following precautionary measures are recommended:

- Wear clothing that covers skin when outdoors. This includes shoes or boots (no open toed shoes), and tucking pants into socks.
- Immediately treat any fire ant stings with proper medicines that take away pain and, most importantly, protect against further infection.
- Control the fire ant populations in areas people and pets visit.
- Repel fire ants temporarily by spraying insect repellents on clothing and shoes.
- Discourage pests by keeping all food and garbage covered.
- Avoid smashing, swatting, or crushing pests.
- Stay away from insect nests/ant mounds.

As with all insecticides, please read and follow the use instructions on the package. For more information about fire ants and/or fipronil, log onto www.gardentech.com.

For more information, please contact Gini Dietrich at (312) 884-5194 or e-mail gini.dietrich@armentdietrich.com.

FIRE UP THE QUESTIONS: *We Have Fire Ant Facts!*

- Fire ants can only swallow liquids! Liquids found by worker ants are swallowed and brought back to the nest and then are regurgitated for the other ants. Solids are broken up and drug back to the nest.
- Fire ants create mounds above and below ground to regulate their habitat’s climate.
- When female fire ants have mated, they break off their wings and hide underground.
- Sections of roads have caved in due to fire ant activity in the soil below the asphalt.
- To sting, a fire ant must take hold of the skin with its mouth, double over their abdomen, and inject.
- Fire ants have been found living in walls, around plumbing, in electrical equipment, traffic signal control boxes, and airport runway lights.