

Garden Ants

Advice leaflet about Ants

One of the commonest insects that invade houses is the Garden Ant. The ant is an active insect and nests outside in grass, walls and under paving. It enters buildings in search of food.

Appearance

The Garden Ant is a relatively large ant 3-5mm in length and dark brown to black in colour.

Life Cycle

Ants have developed different individual groups to carry out specific tasks i.e. workers (sterile females), fertile males, and queens (fertile females). The worker ants build and extend the nest, look after the young and find food, whereby they become pests. They are attracted to sweet foodstuffs, which they take back to the nest and feed to the larvae and queen. Flying ants are the reproductive males and females. These mating ants are winged and have a nuptial swarming flight during a few days in July or August. Mating takes place in the air and the female then seeks out a nest site where she stays for the winter. The males then die off. The following spring (April) she lays her eggs, the larvae hatch in 3-4 weeks and are fed by the queen until they pupate. The first worker ants then emerge.

How Can Ant Infestations Be Controlled?

Although frequently inaccessible and difficult to destroy, ants' nests must be eradicated if infestations are to be successfully controlled. The nests of Garden Ants can be located by following their trails, and by observing small piles of fine earth brought up for example from under flagstones.

1. Boiling water poured on the nest will control the infestation for a short time at least.
2. This should be followed by puffing a residual insecticidal powder product into the hole. Select a powder product that lists ants on its label.
3. Potential food sources should be protected from attack.
4. Using an appropriate insecticidal aerosol for flying insects should control flying ants.
5. A residual insecticidal lacquer can be applied around door thresholds, wall/floor junctions, windows, ventilators, ducts and drains, in fact anywhere where you see ants run. Attention should be given to small cracks.
6. Some products cause the workers to destroy their own nest for example sugar based liquid bait containing borax. The workers are attracted to the bait and carry the insecticide back to the nest.

If you regularly experience problems with ants it is recommended the above treatment commences during the late spring.

Will the Treatments Affect Other Animals/Pets?

Some products on the market are not harmful to pets whereas some are. You are advised to read the label on whichever product you use and follow the instructions carefully, taking the necessary precautions when applying the product.

Local Authority Service

If you do not wish to try to deal with an infestation yourself, the Environmental Health Department does offer a service, although there is a charge for this. If you would like a Pest Control Officer to visit to treat the infestation, please telephone the department on **01799 510370** to make an appointment. A fixed standard charge is made to cover this service. Also should the initial treatment be unsuccessful within two weeks one further treatment will be carried out to at no extra cost.

We accept the following credit/debit cards: VISA, VISA DELTA, MASTERCARD, SWITCH. Please have your details ready when requesting an appointment.

All products used by the Council are approved for use on domestic and commercial premises under the Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986.

Alternatively, there are a number of private pest control companies that will also do this work, and you can find more details from the local telephone directory.