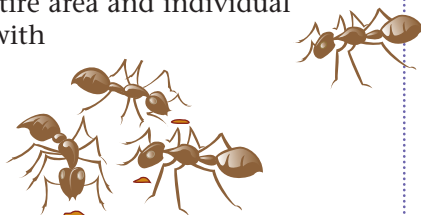




How to Control Ants at Home

Ants are troublesome insects because they often enter homes and contaminate food. The best way to avoid ant problems is to seal them out of the house. If this does not work, ants can be controlled by finding and treating the nest, or by feeding them bait that contains pesticide.

The following suggestions apply to all ants, however stinging fire ants are best treated using the two-step method. In the two-step method, bait is broadcast over an entire area and individual mounds are treated with an insecticide. Fire ants require baits specifically labeled for their control. Fire ant baits do not affect most other ants that infest houses.



Preventing ant problems

- Keep plants and grass away from the house foundation to reduce the number of ant nests.
- Store food in sealed containers. Do not leave food out overnight.
- Repair dripping pipes or water faucets.
- Fill any cracks in the foundation. Seal with caulking around doors and windows where ants might enter.
- Trim trees and shrubs so they do not touch the building.



To find the nest

Look outdoors around the foundation of the house, or in nearby trees. Look for ants entering holes, mounds or going under rocks or lumber. You can find many nests simply by turning over stones or other objects on the ground.

If you cannot easily find a nest, place bottle caps or pieces of foil with a small amount of peanut butter and jelly in several locations. Watch for ant trails coming to the food and follow them back to their nest.

Once you have found the nest, treat it with an approved insecticide spray. Do not use gasoline or other flammable liquids to kill ant nests. These products are very dangerous and pollute the soil.

If you can't find a nest ...

Use a commercial bait designed for ants, or make your own. Commercial baits often come in plastic stations. Be sure to keep the stations clean and handle them only after washing your hands. Ants are repelled by many odors, including tobacco and some cleaning products.

If one type of station does not seem to attract ants, try another kind. Different kinds of ants prefer different kinds of foods.

Once the ants begin to feed, do not disturb or spray them. These ants are carrying toxic food back to the nest.

A simple homemade bait can be prepared using boric acid. Remember that although boric acid is not dangerous to handle, it can be toxic if eaten. Keep it clearly labeled and away from food containers to avoid accidents.

Directions to mix bait

Choose an attractive food for the ants (jelly or peanut butter).

Mix 1 teaspoon of boric acid with 1 cup of food. Do not add more boric acid because this reduces its effectiveness.

Place the bait where you have seen ants, then watch and follow ants to their nest. Keep the bait fresh and moist.

Once you have found the nest, treat it with an approved insecticide or spray, or use bait stations from a grocery or hardware store. When using insecticides, always read and follow the instructions on the label.

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