

## Using Pesticides on Ants

Most times preventative actions take care of nuisance ant problems. Pesticides are chemicals designed to kill pests. They come in many forms such as “bug sprays”, concentrates, dusts, baits, bombs, etc. Since pesticides are poisons, they should be used sparingly and carefully. If you decide to use chemicals on ants, here are some tips:

### Indoors

- Use enclosed, tamper-proof bait traps that mix food with the pesticide. Workers will carry the pesticide/food mixture back to the nest and feed the queen, thus killing the colony. Choose baits containing hydramethylnon, boric acid, fipronil, sulfluramid or abamectin.
- Avoid sprays, foggers and dusts. These products are risky because they leave residues on indoor surfaces and can be breathed, triggering asthma. Although some ants may be killed, the nest will send in more, especially if food is still available.

### Outdoors

- Ant nests can be destroyed or discouraged by digging up, or soaking with hot soapy water.
- Avoid using perimeter sprays and granules around the home for ants. Sprays leave residues and kill many other small creatures besides ants. Birds often eat pesticide granules and can be killed.
- Using the wrong product for the type of pest you have may result in risks to your health without any benefit of ant management.

### If Using Pesticides, Always:

- Read all label warnings **before** use!
- Follow the label directions exactly

- Keep pesticides up high and locked, out of reach of children and pets
- Dispose of unused or unwanted pesticides and empty containers at household hazardous waste events scheduled in your area. Call your city or county for more information.

### NEED MORE HELP?

- **PA IPM Program Problem Solver**

<http://paipm.cas.psu.edu/1445.htm>

- **Pesticides & Alternatives**

<http://paipm.cas.psu.edu/1314.htm>

- **Identifying Common Household Insects in Pennsylvania**

<http://pubs.cas.psu.edu/FreePubs/pdfs/UF021.pdf>

- **New York State IPM Program**

[http://www.nysipm.cornell.edu/publications/carpenter\\_ant/files/carpenter\\_ant.pdf](http://www.nysipm.cornell.edu/publications/carpenter_ant/files/carpenter_ant.pdf)

### CONTACT US TO LEARN MORE:

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### *The Pennsylvania IPM Program*

The Pennsylvania IPM Program is a collaboration between the Pennsylvania State University and the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture aimed at promoting integrated pest management in both agricultural and urban. For more information, contact the program at (814) 865-2839, or Web site <http://www.paipm.org>.

# Got Ants?



**A safe, effective, economical and environmentally-friendly approach to managing pests**

# Eliminating Ants with IPM



## WHAT IS IPM?

IPM manages pests by combining the tactics that are most likely to be safe and effective, including prevention and other alternatives. Pesticides, if used, should be the least hazardous to humans and target only the pest. With IPM, you ask “Why is the pest here?”, and remove the conditions allowing the pest to enter and live.

## WHY USE IPM FOR ANTS?

- Less hazardous to human health
- More likely to give long-term control
- Easier to carry out safely and effectively
- More cost-effective
- Less toxic to non-target organisms

## STEPS TO MANAGING ANTS

### Pest Identification

Detecting and positively identifying the ants will help you decide on a plan of action. It can also help determine how severe the problem is. Ants, like bees, are social insects with a queen and workers. Their nests are usually outdoors



(Actual size)

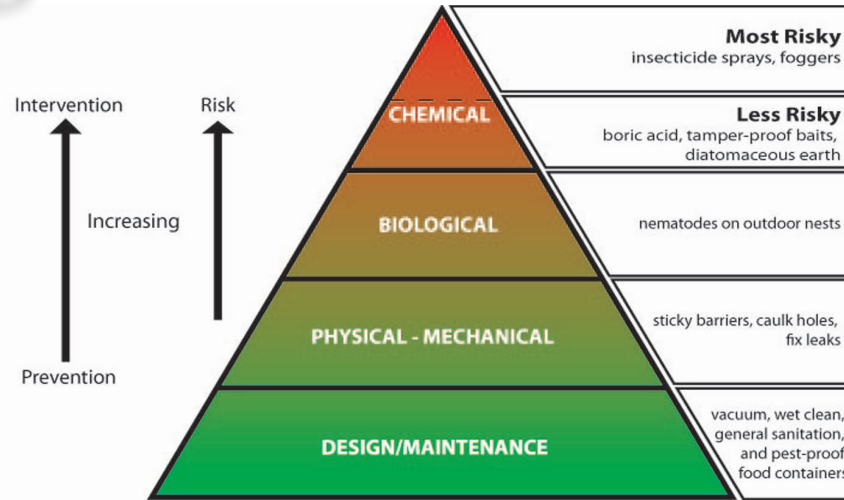


### Pavement Ant

1/10 to 1/8 inch long, light to dark brown. One of many species of small nuisance ants that occasionally invade homes.

### Carpenter Ant

1/4 to 1/2 inch long, shiny dark brown to black, can be destructive to homes and require different tactics than household nuisance ants.



## Pyramid of IPM Tactics for Indoor Nuisance Ants

The pyramid explains some of the different tactics used in IPM practices. Think of each level as a drawer full of tools. Design/maintenance methods are lower in risk and focus on prevention of the problem. Try to use tactics on the lowest levels if possible.

in the ground. Nuisance ants enter the home by following a chemical trail to the food found by a nestmate.

### Prevention

The first step in preventing problems with ants is eliminating what is attracting them, usually food and water. By eliminating these attractants you can get long-term control and avoid the need to repeatedly use pesticides, which generally provide only short-term results.

- Prevent ants from entering your home by sealing off all cracks and crevices around windows, doors and pipes with caulking.

- Eliminate sources of food and water - repair water leaks, clean up all spills and crumbs, and don't let snacks or pet food sit out.

### Got Ants Already?

Try using non-chemical methods first.

- Follow ants' trails to see where they are getting in and what they are after.
- Wipe up ants' chemical trails with soapy water or vinegar and water.
- Ants trapped in the house can be vacuumed up. Be sure to discard the bag.