



# PEST CONTROL FACTS - ANTS

There are more than 8000 known species of ants. They differ greatly in the way that they construct their nests, form their colonies and obtain their food.

Most ants are beneficial, scavenging on waste material and on other insects. Some, however, are pests and need to be controlled.

Find Our More about Pest Control with Ants on the next page.

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# PEST CONTROL ANTS

## NUISANCE FACTOR

The worker ants are often a considerable nuisance when foraging for food or water along scent-marked trails. They feed on most foodstuffs.

Pharaoh's ants, preferring proteinaceous foods like meat, cheese and fats, the garden ant favouring sweet materials. They commonly chew on materials and packaging and can even bite children.

Black ants mass round sweet foods in the home but are a nuisance outside too. They excavate the soil, making it dry whilst helping to cultivate greenfly to feed on the sweet secretions the greenfly produces whilst feeding.

## LIFE CYCLES

Pharaoh's ants are social insects. Each member of the colony has a particular function within the community. Around 10% of workers forage for food whilst the remainder continue rearing and building the nest. The whole cycle from egg laying to adult takes about 5 weeks.

Mating of black ants takes place almost exclusively on the wing and occurs for 2-3 hours when large swarms of winged ants can be seen. After mating the males die and the females lose their wings and dig a hole in the soil where they form a cell in which they overwinter.

## CONTROL

The control of Pharaoh's ants is difficult due to their highly developed social structure and the inaccessibility of their nests.

An initial survey must be conducted to determine the level of infestation. Once the extent has been determined, insecticidal bait or insect growth regulators can be applied to the perimeter of the infested area, progressing carefully inwards until the whole area has been treated. Further monitoring may be necessary.

Black garden ants, whilst posing no major threat to humans, can be a nuisance if they enter the home. Control can only be achieved by the destruction of the nests which entails applying insecticide in and around the nest ensuring that insecticide is present at important points such as doors, windows, vents, ducts and drains.

The use of insecticidal baits applied directly to the nest, along ant runs, near foraging ants and into cracks and crevices can prove very effective. Alternatively, a water dispersible powder or liquid insecticide can be applied. Their residual activities can extend to many weeks in dry conditions. Aerosol products can be used as a spot-treatment / quick knockdown for flying ants.