



earth-wise guide to

Indoor Pests

# Ants



magnified ant

Wizzie Brown

## description

Ants have pinched or narrow waists and elbowed antennae

## infestation

Ants move inside the home in search of food and water; generally, they are attracted to sugars, sweet syrups, meats and fats

## habits

All worker ants are female. The queen stays in the nest and lays eggs. Males are only produced for reproductive purposes. Worker ants take care of the colony by creating and tending the nest, the queen and brood and by foraging.

## Least Toxic Solutions

### Prevention

- Keep your home clean
  - Clean up spilled food and drinks immediately
  - Do not leave dirty dishes, food, or pet food out overnight
  - Sweep and vacuum often
  - Put garbage in plastic bags and take outside several times a week
  - Rinse recyclable items and recycling bins often
  - Empty refrigerator drip pans regularly
- Store food and pet food in containers with tight-fitting lids
- Repair plumbing leaks
- Prevent pests from entering the home by placing insecticidal dusts such as diatomaceous earth (DE) in openings around pipes, windows and doors and then seal the cracks

### Solutions

- To treat indoors without using insecticides, thoroughly wash ant trails with soapy water or cleaning product to eliminate trails and then seal entryways
- If washing the trails does not work, use only insecticides labeled for the location and pest to be treated, and place it between a new ant trail and food source
- Try ant baits in child-proof, plastic stations first – they are safe, easy to use and effective
- Use baits with fipronil, boric acid or hydramethylnon – ants food preferences can change so if one bait doesn't work, try another after a week
- Insecticidal gel baits in applicator tubes are also easy to use and very effective
- Once you've found a bait the ants like, be patient – baits may take several days to start getting results
- If you must use dusts or sprays, do not apply near baits – it can contaminate the bait
- Apply dusts and sprays to baseboards, cracks, openings around water pipes, and under the sink
- If ants remain a problem, hire a professional pest control service

### References:

Texas IPM, Texas AgriLife Extension,  
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