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# WINNING THE BATTLE AGAINST ANTS

7 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW



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# WINNING THE BATTLE AGAINST ANTS



## 7 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

*Where there's one, there's a million!*

Ants have been and will always be one of the **biggest perennial pests that a homeowner or professional will deal with.** There are thousands of species of Ants in the world and range through every environment imaginable, except the arctic, extreme mountaintops and under the sea. Face it, the only way to “get away from ants” would be to move to an area so inhospitable for life that not even humans with technology could live there for an extended period of time.

So how does a homeowner, or pest professional for that matter, win the battle against these globally dispersed, highly evolved social insects? I'll tell you the truth, its not always easy.

***Here are some of the best tips and tricks:***

- [1]** Don't focus on the individual ants you see. Each ant you see is a member of a larger ant colony, usually numbering in the thousands to tens of thousands, some ant colonies will grow to millions of members depending on the species! For every ant you see, there will be hundreds more behind them unless you deal with the colony as a whole. Try and locate the home of the colony if you can.



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## 7 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

### *The ant army in your backyard.*

**[2]** **Don't ignore the outdoors!** Almost all pest species of ants will have their origins in their natural environment, outdoors. Just because you're seeing ants in your kitchen doesn't mean that's where they're currently living. Most ant colonies will establish a home in a protected setting like a tree stump or underneath a sidewalk or patio slab, then send out foragers over a large area to locate and



exploit food resources. Odds are, any pest ants you notice within the home have their origins outdoors, maybe even a hundred feet or more from your house.

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## 7 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

### *Cleaning, your #1 defense.*

**[3]** Try a good cleaning BEFORE you apply any pesticides. Since most ants are scavenging for food, a thorough cleaning both indoors and out will significantly impact the ant colony. Indoors, you should think about an in-depth, spring-cleaning type of cleaning, not just a quick mop up. Finding ants in the cupboard? Empty it out, clean down the shelves and wipe down the stored items before returning them. You may even want to put stored items in a sealable, airtight container if they don't come in one already. On the exterior, power washing or scrubbing and hosing down patio spaces and furniture and especially garbage cans will go a long way in helping controlling the ant activity.



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### *Change it up.*

**[4]** Try a few different products. There's not many "Magic Bullets" in the pest control industry, so I wouldn't expect to find one sitting on the shelves of the local hardware store. Professional pest control operators tend to integrate several types of products, and sometimes will even use varying products within types. For example, you may want to use a repellent spray indoors to try and drive the ants back outside where you've placed some bait traps. **Some liquid or aerosol sprays may not be safe to use indoors,** so you may need to use an indoor product

indoors and the outdoor product outdoors for the greatest effect. Ants are also notoriously finicky eaters when it comes down to choosing and utilizing bait products. Using a few different types of bait products, stations or gels, will help you determine which bait the ants are most interested in. Don't be afraid to mix and match products or use more than one option. Just be sure you're using each product properly and correctly (see below).



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## 7 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

### *Safety first!*

**[ 5 ]** Always read the product label and follow instructions carefully!

All pesticides sold in the US MUST have an EPA approved label that contains safety precautions and directions for use. Read the label, all of it!!! The instructions will tell you how to mix the product



(if applicable), the best places to apply it, any hazards to the user or applicator and if there are any special precautions you must take. For example, certain products are extremely toxic to tropical fish and the tiniest mist can wipe out an entire aquarium. Don't under mix or over apply! Using some products too often increase hazard to the residents of the building AND make them less effective, a terrible combination.



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## 7 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

### *What good are ants?*

**[6]** Not all ants are pests. Ants are a hugely beneficial family of insects and only rarely attain pest status by entering the home. Most ant species would rather exist outdoors and away from people since they're adapted to that style of life through evolution. When you find ants doing ant type things in the garden, I'd say leave

them alone! Ants are responsible for pollinating many types of flowering plants and fruits, much like bees.

Don't try and rid every inch of your backyard of ants because it simply will not work. The best compromise is to maintain a clean patio and garbage area and apply a repellent pesticide to the foundation of your home to prevent entry by foragers. There are a handful of structurally

infesting ant species like Pharaoh Ants that do not originate outdoors, its best to contact a pest control professional when dealing with these species as they are extremely difficult to control.



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## 7 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

### *Keep your ants on a log.*

**[7]** Periodically evaluating your results is key. Okay, so this isn't a spray-once-and-have-done-with-it-kind of affair. As a matter of fact, sometimes ant control can take even a seasoned professional two or three trips to get results with a full retinue of products. As a Do-It-Yourselfer you may as well utilize a powerful tool used by professionals, record keeping. Write down what you use and when you use it, keep a written log and refer back to it. Most importantly, it'll keep you from duplicating previous steps that may not have worked in the past. If you monitor ant activity in relation to the applications you make, you might find a relationship between effective measures and ant activity so you can eliminate products and steps that haven't worked for you in the past. You can even keep the log from year to year if you're having that kind of problem, maybe in the future you can predict your ant problem and head them off before they get in the house!



**DON'T DELAY!**

Ants can be a very complex pest issue to deal with, don't be afraid to call in for back up. Remember your pest control professional will have training and experience in dealing with ant control, not to mention access to professional quality products that are not legally available to you as a homeowner. A professional will also be able to apply products to reduce risk and exposure to children, pets and other residents of the home. Don't be worried, sometimes it's okay to ask for help.

**CALL YOUR PEST PROFESSIONAL**

**CALL US TODAY!**



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