



Integrated Pest Control Solutions

County of San Diego, Department of Agriculture Weights & Measures
Integrated Pest Control Program
Providing Safe and Effective Pest management using the least toxic methods
ipc.awm@sdcounty.ca.gov



Integrated Pest Management

Quarter 3 Topic: ANTS

It starts with the scouts, the oddball ants you see alone, wandering aimlessly as if they were lost. When a scouting ant finds food, they carry some back to the nest and communicate its location to the rest of the colony. You know what happens next... great swaths of ants appear to carry the food back to their nest.

Frequently, someone will spray insecticides or even apply cleaning product on the trails of ants. However, this will not solve the problem because the queen is at home in the nest laying more eggs. That is why it is important to locate the nest and why it is also important **not** to spray ant trails. Spraying ant trails can cause the natural splitting of nests to be accelerated and lead to the formation of new nests.

Many households help ants meet their nutritional requirements through a lack of sanitation and storage practices without even realizing it. An ant's opportunity to locate food can be limited by sanitation practices carried out by everyone.

Sanitation and Exclusion are the Solution:

- Frequently sweep, vacuum, or mop floors.
- Clean countertops and other food areas frequently.
- Store all food in tightly sealed containers or in the refrigerator.
- Rinse all food residues from glass, metal, or paper containers before discarding them.
- Take the garbage out daily.
- Eliminate water sources including condensation, leaks, and water in plant saucers.
- Keep sinks and countertop surfaces dry.
- Seal, caulk, or weather-strip entryways into a structure (e.g., doors, pipes, and windows).
- Trim trees and bushes back from your home to ensure that insects aren't using them as a "ladder" to gain entry.
- Do not store unrinsed empty cans or bottles inside.

If you are implementing sanitation practices and still have ants, it's no surprise. Rather than use of chemicals, try soap and warm water to remove trailing ants and their food or water source. Soapy water washes away the ant's pheromone trails that the ants use to lead other ants to the food source and forces ants to start looking for new food sources.

Once sanitation and exclusion practices have been implemented, pesticides can be a useful tool if issues are persistent. Ant Bait is the preferred treatment for most ant infestations. When baits are used properly, they are highly effective. They use the natural foraging behavior of ants to recruit and share resources, thereby spreading the bait toxin throughout the entire colony and eventually destroying the nest.

Baits tend to be slower acting compared to sprays or dusts, taking 7 to 14 days for the bait to treat the ant problem. Fast-acting spray insecticides only kill foraging ants, allowing the queen and nest workers to



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survive and replace those ants that are killed. Slow-acting food-based bait insecticides allow time for the foragers to exchange food with their nest-mates, eventually eliminating the entire nest.



Argentine Ants: Are the most common ants in San Diego County. Although they can slightly bite people when provoked, they do not attack. These ants carry no know diseases and have no public health importance.

The County of San Diego, Department of Agriculture, Weights & Measures, Integrated Pest Control (IPC) Program performs several functions within the County of San Diego. IPC contributes to a safe and healthy work environment by providing safe and effective structural pest control at County facilities. IPC also performs weed control work along County roads and rights-of-ways, County airports, County sanitization and flood control conveyances, and County Parks. This work preserves road visibility and clearance; reduces fire danger along roadways and intersections; enhances drainage to prevent flooding; and helps protect the region’s biodiversity. We adhere to the Board of Supervisors’ Policy F-45, requiring the use of Integrated Pest Management techniques with an environmentally sound approach to reduce the use of chemical pest control methods.

		Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
Type-of-Pesticide	Quantity	Treatment Description	Quantity	Treatment Description	Quantity	Treatment Description	Quantity	Treatment Description	
Herbicides									
	Dry	22 lbs.	334 acres	0 lbs.	817 acres	18 lbs.	648 acres		
	Liquid	393 gallons		608 gallons		451 gallons			
Insecticides									
	Dry	39 lbs.	375 applications	19 lbs.	119 applications	42 lbs.	82 applications		
	Liquid	3 gallons		3 gallons		1.1 gallons			
Rodenticide									
	Dry	444 lbs.	350 stations	758 lbs.	350 stations	148 lbs.	350 stations		
Non-Chemical									
	Traps	1,562	72 facilities	937	116 facilities	849	98 facilities		