

**SSBC, Inc.**

**Pest Management**

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## **Ants Quick Reference**



**About:** Ants are nuisance pests around the home because they feed on and contaminate human foods, infest structures by nesting in wall voids and/or underneath kitchen sinks and other places, and build unsightly mounds in lawns and other landscapes. In some cases, ants are able to inflict painful bites or can have venomous stings. Ants do not attack or eat fabrics, leather or wood in houses. However, some species can establish nests in decaying wood, including wood in human structures. Several species of ants are found in or around houses in California. In general, the most common ants can be grouped as house-infesting ants, yard-infesting ants, and carpenter ants. The most commonly encountered pest ants are pharaoh, white footed, Argentine, ghost, pyramid, carpenter, rover, native fire, imported fire, crazy, thief, Caribbean, acrobat, and big-headed ants. Ants belong to the insect order Hymenoptera. They are close relatives of bees and wasps. Each colony can hold up to half a million ants. They can all get up and go very quickly if the colony is threatened.

**Life cycle:** Worker ants can live for up to seven years, while a queen can live for up to 15 years. Ants swarm once every year. The young queens fly away and set up new colonies. If you hear people talking about flying ants, this may be the swarm they are referring to, or they could be termite alates (winged reproductives).

**How Pest Management works:** Once they've identified your ants, they can use a range of powerful insecticides to deal with them efficiently. This gives you the reassurance that the problem has been fully dealt with.

Treatments are targeted to your specific ant species in order to solve the problem quickly, while ensuring the safety of your family and pets.

**IPM (Integrated Pest Management) for Ants:** Our Pest Control Technicians understand the habits of different types of ants and can offer discreet and targeted ant control. It goes without saying that all our treatments are safe for your staff and customers.

Ants can be controlled with baits, crack-and-crevice treatments, indoor space-and-surface treatments, and outdoor barrier and broadcast treatments, as well as void and attic treatments. However, methods that target individual trails of ants such as crack-and-crevice treatments and indoor space-and-surface treatments are usually a "quick fix" and ineffective in the long term because they do not significantly reduce the ant population and do not affect the queen.

Ant baits, however, were developed to exploit the foraging and nestmate feeding behaviors of ants. Baits are the most effective way to get toxicant into the nest. Bait treatments are effective for control of many ant species and are available in homeowner and professional product versions. Since ants rely heavily on trophallaxis (reciprocal feeding), the bait toxicant can be thoroughly distributed to the members of the colony, including the queen and brood. Baits are effective because they not only kill the foraging members of the colony, but they kill the queen(s) so no other ants are produced. Place bait next to nests whenever possible, but avoid placing bait in areas where it can be found by small children. Bait is most successful if it does not compete with other food sources in or around buildings, so combine baiting with sanitation practices.

**How can you help:** The best approach to ant control in the home is cleanliness. Any type of food or food particles can attract and provide food for ants. Store food in tight containers. Remove plants that can attract ants, or control aphids, whiteflies and other honeydew-producing insects on plants in and around structures. Removing any materials or vegetation that is serving as a nesting site to ants is beneficial towards a long-term ant management strategy. Try to remove piles of old lumber, firewood, railroad ties, and debris that can serve as potential nesting sites for many ants including Argentine, Caribbean crazy, crazy, white-footed, and fire ants. Reduce moisture sources, including condensation and leaks.

**If you have additional questions, please contact us!  
SSBC, Inc. 916-400-4305 .**