

Black Ant Control

Advice to Householders



Black Ant Control

Charactereristics

The workers are between 3.4 and 5mm long. They are dark brown-black in colour with a 'waist' which bears characteristic nodes or scales. The queens are larger, around 15mm in length, mid brown in colour and have a 'waist ' of only one section.

Behaviour

Few species, which nest outdoors, are likely to enter houses regularly except for the black ant. Ants are active insects which nest outside in grass, walls and under paving. They will forage widely in search of food, which is how they come to enter domestic premises. The social habits of ants have created the development of a caste system where individuals are responsible for specialised duties within their community. The workers (sterile formates), and fertile males build and extend the nest, look after larval forms and forage for food whereby they become pests. The queens perform none of these duties, but remain exclusively within the nests.

Mating amongst sexual individuals takes place in flight. These swarms persist for 2-3 hours after which the males die, the females shed their wings and dig a cell in the soil where they hibernate.

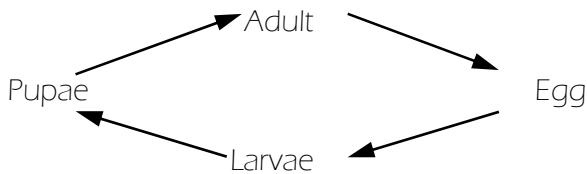
Significance

Foraging worker ants cause an annoyance as they search for food. Well-defined trails and clustering around the food source are a classic sign of ant activity. They tend to prefer sweet foods e.g. sugar. They are unpleasant and may damage food for human consumption, but they are not of any significance to public health.

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In gardens their excavations around plant roots make the soil excessively dry. They will also cultivate greenfly in order to obtain the sugary honey dew secretions that these aphids produce. They can also be beneficial as predators of other insects and scavengers.

Life Cycle



Control Measures

Hygiene Management

Although frequently inaccessible and difficult to destroy, the nest must be eradicated to control the infestation. The nests of black ants can be located by following their trails. You should identify potential food sources and protect these from attack.

Insecticidal Control

Insecticidal treatments can be applied in and around the nest and should aim to ensure that a residual film is left at strategic points such as points of entry to buildings e.g. doors, windows, ventilators, ducts and drains and wall/floor junctions. Ant runs and all other harbourages should be treated according to the label instructions. Particular attention should be given to small insignificant cracks, which may be major points of entry for ants.

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Other information leaflets available:

- ▶ Carpet, Museum & Fur Beetle Control
- ▶ Furniture Beetle (Woodworm) & Wharf Borer Control
- ▶ Cockroach Control
- ▶ Larder Beetle Control
- ▶ Spider Beetle Control
- ▶ Housefly Control
- ▶ Flea Control
- ▶ Biscuit Beetle Control
- ▶ Silverfish, Earwig, woodlouse & Slug Control
- ▶ Psocid (Booklouse) Control
- ▶ Seagull Control
- ▶ Pest Control Advice

Customer Services

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www.babergh.gov.uk/babergh/pests

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