

## PEST CONTROL SERVICE

### Pest Information Leaflet No. 4

#### ANTS



#### Description

The Garden Ant (*Lasius niger*) is by far the most commonly encountered species of ant in the UK. It has a black, dark brown or red segmented body of about 4mm length; the queen is brown and upwards of 10mm length. The Pharaoh Ant (*Monomorium pharaonis*) is also occasionally found in the UK in hospitals, prisons and the like. It is yellow in colour and at 2mm in length is significantly smaller than the garden ant.

#### Biology and Habitat

Ants are socially complex insects living in colonies in large nests. One or more queens will lay eggs and feed the larvae which develop into fertile males, sterile females (workers) and fertile females. The worker ants are responsible for building the nest usually outdoors in walls, under paving stones, in flower beds and under grass. Workers leave the nest on foraging expeditions to gather nectar from flowers and sugary solutions produced by aphids. Their attraction to sweet foods also causes them to invade houses and other premises through doorways, windows and gaps in brickwork and foundations.

Mating takes place in the summer when the winged males and females are seen in large swarms. When mating has taken place the males die and the females remove their wings and dig a cell in the ground where they spend the winter. A new nest is started the following

spring. The eggs are laid in April and the larvae hatch in 3-4 weeks. They are fed by the queen until they pupate. The first worker ants then emerge.

#### Importance

As a consequence of foraging activities garden ants often appear indoors in great numbers; this is unpleasant and unacceptable to most people. However, garden ants neither carry germs nor do they spread disease and hence their presence does not constitute a risk to health.

#### Control

In the garden, try to identify how the ants are gaining entry into the building and seal the point(s) with cement mortar or mastic. Trace the ants back to the nest which should be dug up and large quantities of boiling water applied. When the area has dried this should be followed by the application of an insecticide, preferably a powder, obtainable from garden centres etc.

Indoors, ensure that all sugary products are held in sealed containers. Line waste bins with plastic bags and empty them regularly. Insecticide may be applied to affected areas either using an aerosol specified for 'crawling insects' or a powder containing BENDIOCARB in a puffer pack.

#### Safety

Not all insecticides are safe for use indoors, particularly where food is present. To protect yourself and others and to minimise damage to the environment **ALWAYS READ AND FOLLOW THE APPLICATION AND USE INSTRUCTIONS PRINTED ON THE CONTAINER.**

### **Pest Control Service**

Stroud District Councils Pest Control Service can provide a professional service for the treatment of ants. For further details and current charges please telephone Stroud 754919 or write to:

Pest Control Service  
Environmental Health Service  
Stroud District Council  
Ebley Mill, Westward Road  
Stroud, Glos. GL5 4UB

e-mail:- [environmental.health@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:environmental.health@stroud.gov.uk)

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