

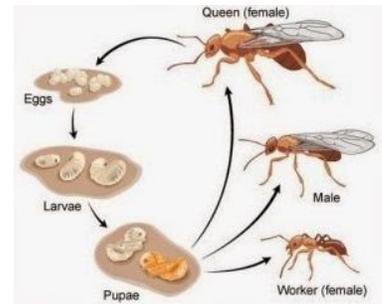
VECTOR CONTROL BRANCH
Hawaii Department of Health

ANTS

Ants live in colonies containing one or more queens, a few males, and many female workers. The queen's only function is to lay eggs; all other work such as food gathering, caring of queens and larvae, and protection of the colony are conducted by the female workers. The few males present die soon after mating with the new queens. New colonies are started by winged queens that fly alone to establish new nesting sites, or by new queens that leave the nest with a small group of workers to a new nesting site. The first brood of a lone queen is cared for by the queen until the first few workers emerge; thereafter, all work is done by workers. While ants eat almost anything edible, they do have preferences for certain types of food. Some ants prefer sweet things while others prefer meat or fatty food.

LIFE CYCLE

The eggs, larvae, and pupae are placed in special areas and cared for by the workers. Some ant pupae are protected in cocoons. These cocoons are often mistakenly called eggs when they are carried by workers from a nest that has been disturbed. Larvae of most species are usually fed only liquid from a storage sac in the worker's gut.



CONTROL METHODS

The most effective method of ant control is to treat nests with an aerosol insecticide labeled for ant control. Nests are usually located by following ant trails from a food source. Ant trails may be developed if none are present by placing attractive food at different locations. Applying a residual barrier with an aerosol labeled for ant control around food and water sources may be used as a control method when nests cannot be treated directly. Persistence is necessary in this method of control since a single application usually does not eliminate well established colonies of ants. **DO NOT APPLY INSECTICIDES TO FOOD, FOOD PREPARATION AREAS OR EATING UTENSILS.**

Ant baits are prepared specifically for certain species of ants. Read the label to determine whether it will attract the species infesting your home. Baits work best when other food sources are eliminated.

PREVENTATIVE CONTROL

There are many pest species of ant in Hawaii, but regardless of the species, the key to controlling all of them is to stop them from becoming established in your home. Once established, they will nest in inaccessible places that are difficult to treat with insecticides. **ELIMINATE ANTS IN YOUR HOME AS SOON AS THEY ARE SEEN TO PREVENT THEM FROM BECOMING ESTABLISHED.**

CAUTION: *Certain pesticides and their solvents may cause respiratory irritation. Persons with respiratory diseases should consult their physicians before using any pesticide. IT IS A VIOLATION OF FEDERAL LAW IF PESTICIDES ARE NOT APPLIED EXACTLY AS THE LABEL DIRECTS.*

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Homemade Boric-Acid Bait for Ants

Use only boric acid formulated for pest control. It is dangerous to use medicinal boric acid because it can be confused with sugar or salt.

Mix 1 ½ teaspoons of boric acid powder with 1 cup of water plus ½ cup of powdered sugar. Fill small jars with cotton balls and soak the cotton with the liquid. Poke several holes in the tops of the jars so ants can get in and out easily. Place the jars out of reach of pets and children.

The trick is to use enough boric acid to eliminate ants but not so much that the scout ants are killed before they can return to the colony. If many ants die around the bait station, there is too much poison. If ants keep coming in unreduced numbers for more than a week, your formula is probably too weak.

“Sweetening” a Commercial Bait: Once you know what your ants like (sugar? Leftover cooking oil? Peanut butter?), you can add a small amount of it by poking it inside the holes in the bait trap. Try a few drops of sugar water, oil, or a small dab of peanut butter. If you see ants entering and leaving the trap in larger numbers, you have succeeded at enhancing your bait trap.

Source: “What’s Bugging Me?”
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