

## Fire Ant Control

A typical fire ant colony produces large mounds in open areas, and feeds mostly on young plants, seeds, and sometimes crickets. Fire ants often attack small animals and can kill them. Unlike many other ants, which bite and then spray acid on the wound, fire ants only bite to get a grip and then sting (from the abdomen) and inject a toxic alkaloid venom called Solenopsin, a compound from the class of piperidines. For humans, this is a painful sting, a sensation similar to what one feels when burned by fire &mdash; hence the name fire ant &mdash; and the aftereffects of the sting can be deadly to sensitive individuals. Although fire ants do not typically seek out and attack the face, they are as likely to attack an exposed and vulnerable face as any other body part. The venom is both insecticidal and antibiotic. Researchers have proposed that nurse workers will spray their brood to protect them from microorganisms.

### Damage:

Ants cause various types of damage, depending upon the variety. Carpenter ants tunnel through wood, destroying structures. Pharaoh ants may transmit serious diseases. A fire ant's sting is potentially deadly to susceptible individuals, and all ants contaminate the food they infest.

### Detection and Treatment:

Ants build massive colonies, so their presence is generally detected when you see their nests, or the ants themselves. Treatments involve baiting, insecticide, and sealing off entry to buildings.