

Control of Raspberry Crazy Ants In and Around Homes and Structures

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The Raspberry crazy ant, *Paratrechina* species near *pubens* (Hymenoptera: Formicidae), is a new exotic invasive pest ant species discovered in the Houston area in 2002 that has spread to isolated spots in 14 Texas counties by 2009. Little is known about the biology of this ant, but where it occurs, millions of worker ants are observed in the landscape and inside structures such as homes. They accumulate in electrical equipment causing them to fail. They are irritating to people and domestic animals and seem to displace other animals in infested areas.

Current information about this ant can be found at <http://urbanentomology.tamu.edu>, including how to identify and send specimens in for official identification. This process is essential because counties with positive identifications are added to the list of locations where one of the more effective insecticide products, Termidor® SC

Termiticide/Insecticide (fipronil), can be applied using an expanded treatment pattern around infested home structures.

Control of Raspberry crazy ants in urban areas is difficult and provides only a relatively short period of suppression using currently available treatment methods. Although many insecticide products labeled for ant control are sold through retail outlets to consumers, they are generally less effective than products available to professional Pest Management Providers (PMPs). Although these over-the-counter products do kill ants, the Raspberry crazy ant occurs in such high numbers and is so pervasive in the landscape that control is very short term. Even without using insecticides, piles of dead ants form around the perimeters of buildings and along baseboards indoors. If contact insecticides had been applied to surfaces the layers of dead ants prevent surviving ants from contacting the treated surface and thereby render the application less effective.

Research conducted to assess the effectiveness of available insecticide products and treatment methods have demonstrated that the most effective approaches are best applied by PMPs certified by the Texas Department of Agriculture in a category applicable to use of this product. This qualifies these individuals to purchase the products only available to them and their knowledge of insect control will ensure proper applications are made according to directions provided on the product labels and special labels for control of

this pest. Both the container label and Quarantine Exemption use directions must be in the possession of the applicator at the time of treatment.

Homeowners or occupants are discouraged from trying to battle this pest on their own using retail insecticide products. Accounts of individuals making applications almost every day and using insecticides not in accordance with directions provided on the labels are common. Thus, the cost of home treatments and the potential for health issues due to misuse or overuse can increase relative to using a PMP service.

If you are seeking assistance from a PMP, discuss treatment options with them. Bids may vary widely and products proposed for use may also vary. For this pest ant, the most effective approach at this time is described below:

Profession Pest Management Program:

A. Outdoors



1. The outside perimeter of the home or structure is treated using **Termidor® SC Termiticide/Insecticide** (9.1% fipronil) using the TDA-issued Quarantine Exemption label (see http://www.agr.state.tx.us/vgn/tda/files/1848/23436_termidorlabel.pdf).

For control of crazy ant species associated with man-made structures in Texas within the counties of Bexar, Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Hardin, Harris, Jefferson, Jim Hogg, Liberty, Montgomery, Orange, Walker, Wharton and to include additional counties where positive identification has been made (by Texas A&M entomologists) and posted on <http://urbanentomology.tamu.edu>. Check the Texas Department of Agriculture website for the most current list of counties approved for this use.

Apply **Termidor** as detailed on the present **Termidor SC** container label for perimeter pest control with the exception of the following:

- a. Treatments may be made as a low-pressure general surface spray (coarse flat fan), crack and crevice spray or wall void application, where ants enter the structure, trail around the structure (e.g., around doors, windows, vents, pipes or any exterior openings including foundation cracks or drilled holes, and where wires enter the structure), or where they crawl and hide around the structure. For exterior perimeter treatments, apply 0.06% Termidor SC finished dilution to surfaces up to but not to exceed **3 ft. up and 10 ft. of grass sod out from the foundation**. Mounds or nests can be treated directly within 10 ft from the foundation.

- b. Treatment may be made **up to 10 feet around** areas where ants are found associated with utility wires (electrical, telephone, or cable). Foam treatments can be made to outdoor structural voids where ants may enter, trail or nest.
- c. Treatments should be made as a general surface spray (coarse flat fan), crack and crevice spray or wall void application. For exterior perimeter treatments, apply 0.06% **Termidor SC** finished dilution to surfaces up to but not to exceed **3 ft. up and 10 ft. of sod out from the foundation**. Mounds or nests can be treated directly.

Termidor SC at 0.06% is equivalent to 1.2 oz product/1.5 gallons to treat 1000 sq. ft. or 0.0075 lb ai/1000 sq. ft. or 0.0000075 lb ai/sq. ft. or .0012 oz product/sq. ft.

Apply 0.06% **Termidor SC** finished dilution around doors, windows, vents, pipes or any other exterior openings (including foundation cracks and drilled holes) where ants could enter the structure. Treat the joint where exterior siding (wood, vinyl, aluminum, etc) meets the cement, block or brick foundation. Broadcast treatments may be applied 2 times per year per structure. Treatments may be made 2 times per year per structure, at intervals of 180 days. Making the first treatment in the spring when ants are in the building and re-applying in mid to late summer is one example of timing to help prevent later season buildup of ant numbers. **See use restrictions listed on the label.**

2. For the remainder of the turfgrass areas in the landscape, another product, **TopChoice™ Insecticide** (0.0143% fipronil) granules can be broadcast at a rate of 87 lbs per acre or 2 lbs per 1,000 sq ft as instructed for red imported fire ant and nuisance ant control. Treated turf should be watered in after application. Only one application per year is allowed. Do not apply within 15 ft. of fresh water or 60 ft of estuarine bodies of water.

B. Indoors



1. Many of the typical control tactics for other ants do not provide adequate control of the Raspberry crazy ant. Because colonies predominantly nest outdoors, reliance solely on indoor treatments (see B-6183, “Managing Household Pest Ants” and <https://agrillifebookstore.org/>) to control these ants foraging inside structures is not effective.

If ants are entering structures, a third product, **Phantom® Termiticide-Insecticide** (21.45% chlorfenapyr) can be applied as a spot or crack and crevice spray for residual pest control in houses, apartments, or other residential structures and additional sites

listed on the product label. For control of ants, use a dilution rate of 0.50% (3.0 fl oz or 88 ml per 1 gal water as directed. See precautions listed on product label.

C. Other alternatives

Raspberry crazy ant workers are not attracted to most ant bait products (see B-6099, “Broadcast Baits for Fire Ant Control” at <https://agriflifebookstore.org/>), but there is one product they are known to be attracted to: Prescription Treatment® Brand Advance® Granular Carpenter Ant Bait formulation containing abamectin (see the product label at: http://www.wmmg.com/pdf/label/AdvCarp_v73_Spec_WEB.pdf). Also see E-412 “Carpenter Ants” at <https://agriflifebookstore.org>.

There are other products available for “ant control” contain directions to establish temporary "buffer zones" using contact insecticides applied to surfaces, such as those containing acephate, pyrethroid insecticides (bifenthrin, cypermethrin, cyfluthrin, deltamethrin, lambda-cyhalothin, permethrin, s-fenvalerate, and others). These treatments are often breeched soon after application, depending on population density and time of year and product applied.

What can the homeowner or occupants do to help?

People living or working in buildings and landscapes infested with Raspberry crazy ants should work closely with their contracted PMP to assure that treatments applied can reach their maximum potential. Steps that will help include:

1. Remove any trash or unnecessary landscape elements, trash or debris from the landscape under or in which these ants will nest. Be careful not to discard infested materials in non-infested locations as this will help spread the ant infestation.
2. Outside the structures, remove obstacles that would prevent a thorough uniform spray application of the contact insecticide to the perimeter (3 ft up and 10 ft out from the base of the structure).
3. Inside, move furniture and other obstacles away from walls to enable the PPMP to make a uniform crack and crevice treatment along the baseboard. Vacuum the area to remove dust and dirt so that the contact insecticide is actually applied to the surface.
4. After application and dead ants accumulate, carefully remove them with a leaf blower outdoors or vacuum indoors in a manner that does not disturb or remove the insecticide from the treated surfaces. For example, do not vigorously wipe or scrape clean treated surfaces.

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Policy Statement for Making Chemical Control Suggestions

Suggested pesticides must be registered and labeled for use by the Environmental Protection Agency and the appropriate state Department of Agriculture or regulatory agency. The status of pesticide label clearances is subject to change and may have changed since this publication was printed. County Extension agents and appropriate specialists are advised of changes as they occur.

The USER is always responsible for the effects of pesticide residues, as well as for problems that could arise from drift or movement of the pesticides from his property to that of others. Always read and follow carefully the instructions on the product label.

The information given herein is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by the participating states' Cooperative Extension Service, Agricultural Experiment Station, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service, or Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service is implied.

All pesticides are potentially hazardous to human health and the environment. As a pesticide user, you are legally required to read and carefully follow all directions and all safety precautions on the container label. Label instructions are subject to change, so read the label carefully before buying, using and disposing of any pesticide. Regardless of the information provided in an Extension publication, always follow your product's label. When in doubt about any instructions, contact your pesticide seller, or the manufacturer listed on the label, for clarification. All pesticides should be stored in their original labeled containers and kept out of the reach of children. Never pour leftover pesticides down a storm drain or any other drain.