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TITLE: FIRED UP ABOUT FIRE ANTS!

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We cannot mow our home lawn without having one or more encounters with fire ant mounds. I dull and break several sets of lawnmower blades every year on those mounds. **I HATE FIRE ANTS!**

There is a two-step method to help control fire ants.

The first step is to use baits. Apply baits twice a year in spring and fall. This is a fairly inexpensive way of preventing ants. It may cost about \$25.00 an acre to treat with baits. Use the baits according to label directions when ants are actively looking for food. Ants take the bait into the mound and feed them to each other. Be patients. Baits work slowly. The baits slowly kill the fire ant colony.

Killing the queen is very important in controlling fire ants. The queen remains in the mound and reproduces while other ants go out and build the mound and find food. You can kill many of the foraging ants, but you must kill the queen to destroy the mound. This is why spraying the ground or the mounds or using granular insecticides are not generally good ways of controlling fire ants.

The second step is to treat problem ant colonies. Individual mound treatment is the fastest way to get rid of individual colonies. Individual mound treatment products include the granular products, liquid drenches, and the dry dust product acephate. For small yards or just a few mounds, you may only have to use the individual mound treatments to control all of your fire ants.

Bait includes products with the active ingredients: hydramethylnon, abamectin, fipronil, pyriprozyfen, spinosad, and methoprene.

Mound treatment products have active ingredients with cyfluthrin, d-limonene, deltamethrin, carbaryl, pyrethrins, acephate and permethrin.

Several “organic” products will control fire ants. Examples include spinosad (bait), citrus oil (d-limonene), and pyrethrins or pine oil. Some organic products may cost more and act more slowly than conventional pesticides.

Boiling water (about 3 gallons per mound) can eliminate some fire ant colonies. This method is the treatment choice for any colonies around well heads.

When using any pesticide, read and follow directions carefully.