

## COMMON BLACK ANTS, GARDEN ANT (*LASIUS NIGER*)



### APPEARANCE

- Dark brown-black in colour
- Workers are usually 3-5mm long
- Queens around 12mm long
  - Can live for several years

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Black ants normally live under stones in the ground. They excavate a series of tunnels and throw out the soil into small heaps, often seen around cracks in patio stones.

### HOW DID A PROBLEM OCCUR?

The worker ants forage for food and are attracted to sweet food items, and will sometimes go to great lengths to reach them. If, when foraging, an ant discovers a source of sweet food within your house, it will communicate this to the other foraging ants and will invade in quite large numbers. In this instance, it is important that all food is kept in sealed containers and counters and floors are kept clean from even the smallest spills.

### CONTROL AND TREATMENT

We will usually spray areas in order to create a barrier around your home. This may include doors, window frames, air bricks and around pipes. Our technician will assess what needs treating on an individual basis.

The preferred nesting sites in the wild are under stones so patios and houses are particularly attractive to them. Once a nest is established, it can be a problem for a number of years. On, hot, still, humid days in the summer, large numbers of flying ants leave all the nests in the district and will swarm in the air, looking for mates. Once they have mated, they land and their wings fall off. They will then look for holes to make a new nest in. This can be unfortunately around the perimeter of your house.

The treatment we use is designed to kill the foraging worker ants. This reduces, and eventually eliminates, food brought into the nest. It is **NOT** designed to work instantly and the ants will not die immediately when they cross the barrier. If the foraging ant does not return to the nest (due to contact with our chemical) other ants may follow its path, thus you may see additional ants following our treatment.

If you have ants in the foundations or under an extensive floor, a mating swarm may occur within your property and you may see large numbers of ants. However, if they have come into contact with our insecticide they will die within an hour or so.

### IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The insecticide we use is residual. This means an active film of the insecticide remains active for up to four weeks to prevent the need for frequent reapplication. Therefore it is important not to wash the treated areas for at least 3-4 weeks as this will wash our insecticide away reducing effectiveness.

### FURTHER ADVICE

**Proofing** - Ants can get through holes as wide as 1mm. Thus it is important to seal all entry points, using mastic or other approved fillers.

**Housekeeping** - Ensure all food and drinks are cleaned up, all food is kept covered, this will help prevent ants being attracted to the property.

Find out more about ants (and other pest species) at Microbee:

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