

Children's Health

Fire Ant Bites At Top Of Parents' Worry List

(NAPSA)—Drowned in gasoline, smothered in grits and set on fire. Depending on your point of view, any of these could appear like the right answer to killing just about anything. However, it's the top three home remedies Americans use to rid properties of red, imported fire ants. Unfortunately, none of these methods work.

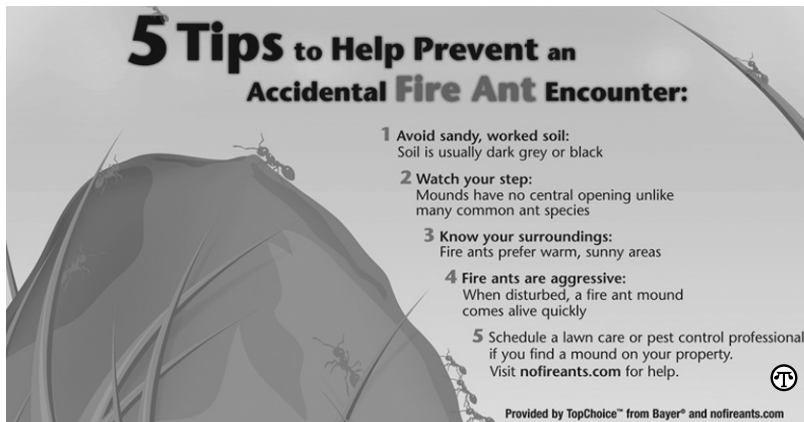
"It's clear that Americans are desperate for solutions to this recurring and potentially dangerous problem," said Dr. Nate Royalty, entomologist with TopChoice™ at Bayer Environmental Science. "In addition to the inconvenience, fire ants pose a significant health threat. They are aggressive and attack very quickly."

Children, the elderly and pets are the most at-risk for fire ant stings. In fact, more children are stung each year by fire ants than all other insect species combined. And parents are worried.

According to a recent survey, parents in southern states are more worried about their children getting stung by fire ants than bicycle or water-related accidents. Forty-four percent of southern homeowners reported at least one family member had been stung in the previous year.

To help protect your family, Bayer Environmental Science and nofireants.com recommend five tips to prevent an accidental fire ant encounter:

1. Avoid sandy, worked soil with a dark grey or black color—mounds range from low-to-the-ground to 18 inches high.



Fire ants are best treated by professionals and by using a proactive approach.

2. Watch your step: Mounds have no central opening like many common ant species.

3. Know your surroundings: Fire ants prefer warm, sunny areas and can appear along a sidewalk, the base of a tree and even a playground or park.

4. Fire ants are aggressive: When disturbed, a fire ant mound will come alive quickly appearing to bubble over like boiling water.

5. Schedule a professional treatment if you find fire ant mounds on your property. To find a professional logon to nofireants.com.

Fire ants pose a significant risk for many Americans. Ten to 15 percent of the general population can experience a severe localized allergic reaction to a sting, and as many as two percent may experience a systemic allergic reaction, which in rare cases results in death.

Traditional methods of controlling fire ants consist of treating

individual mounds. Soil drenching, injections dusts, baits or fumigants, provide a quick kill, but do not always kill all the ants, eliminate the queens or keep them out of the turf for a sustained period.

Now, there's a new method recommended by many lawn care and pest control professionals to combat these pests. TopChoice, a professionally applied product, offers a proactive approach to fire ant control by not only eliminating existing mounds, but also preventing any new mounds for one full year.

"Fire ant prevention through the use of technologies like TopChoice is the best option for people dealing with these pests," says Royalty. "Homeowners should talk with their lawn care or pest control professional, or visit www.nofireants.com for more information."