



Our Insect Enemies



Weather Warms and Ants Venture Indoors

(NAPSA)—As the No. 1 nuisance pest in the United States, ants often become a problem in the warmer weather, as they move indoors in search of food.

But homeowners can take proactive steps now to help prevent a major infestation later.

With more than 700 species in the U.S., it's not surprising that ants are a very common home invader. According to the National Pest Management Association (NPMA), one of the most destructive species is the carpenter ant, which tunnels through wood to build its nest. These insects, which are found nationwide, tunnel through decaying wood before attacking undamaged wood. A carpenter ant infestation can cause severe property damage, which is usually not covered by homeowners' insurance.

Fire ants are a species found in the southern U.S., usually in landscaped areas, garages and near structural foundations. When their moundlike nests are disturbed, fire ants attack with a painful sting.

The most common home-invading species include odorous and nonodorous house ants and pavement ants. These ants will eat almost anything including fruit, meat and cheese, and can contaminate food sources that they infest.

"Most people don't realize that ant infestations can pose serious risks," says Missy Henriksen, vice president of public affairs for NPMA. "From costly property damage to food contamination, ants jeopardize a person's health and safety. Homeowners must pay close attention to signs of a potential infestation and take action if ants are found."

NPMA recommends that home-



Taking proactive steps to discourage ants now can help homeowners avoid a major infestation later on.

owners follow these tips to avoid ant infestations:

- Keep food in sealed containers and dispose of garbage regularly.
- Keep pet food and water dishes clean and remove any spilled food.
- Keep tree branches cut back from the house.
- Seal cracks and holes around a home.
- Do not store firewood and building materials next to your home.
- If you see signs of an ant infestation in your home, contact a licensed pest professional promptly.

For more information on ants, or to find a local pest professional, visit www.pestworld.org.

The NPMA, a nonprofit organization with more than 7,000 members, was established in 1933 to support the pest management industry's commitment to the protection of public health, food and property.