

SAFETY SENSE

Do You Know What Danger May Be Lurking In Your Backyard? A Recent Survey Of Medical Professionals Suggests Consumers Are Unaware Of A Potential Threat

(NAPSA)—A recent survey of more than 200 medical professionals indicates the red imported fire ant continues to be a serious health threat in the southern and western United States.

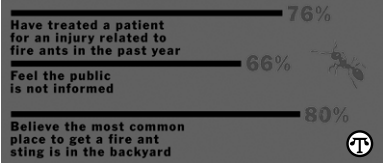
In the past year, 76 percent of medical professionals have treated a patient for a fire ant-related injury, and four out of five medical professionals said that the injuries occurred in the patients' own backyards.

Although Southerners have lived with fire ants since their introduction to the United States in the 1930s, alarmingly, over half of medical professionals (66 percent) believe that the public is not informed of the health threats, ways to avoid fire ant injuries or even general information about these invasive pests. And parents beware: Over one-half of medical professionals indicated that the most common age group of fire ant patients is less than 13 years old.

Fire ants, an invasive species, have no natural predators in this country and currently outnumber populations in their native continent of South America. Currently infesting 19 states, their biology continues to change to adapt to cooler weather, adding new migration states to the list every year. Studies also show that 10 to 15 percent of those stung by fire ants will experience severe localized allergic reactions, with 1 to 2 percent experiencing dangerous systemic reactions that, in rare cases, result in death.

So how should consumers pro-

STINGING BACKYARD DANGERS 200 Medical Professionals say Fire Ants are a Serious Health Threat



tect themselves? According to the survey, medical professionals suggest wearing protective clothing and shoes while outside in an infested area. Bayer Environmental Science, makers of TopChoice fire ant control, recommends the following tips to prevent backyard encounters:

- Be on the lookout: Fire ant mounds look like sandy, worked soil with no central opening.
- Know your surroundings: Fire ants prefer warm, sunny areas and can appear along sidewalks, the base of trees and in shrubbery.
- Fire ants are aggressive: When disturbed, a fire ant mound will come alive quickly, appearing to bubble over like boiling water.
- Schedule a professional treatment and ask about TopChoice, the only proactive approach that eliminates existing mounds and creates an exclusion zone where fire ant populations cannot survive—one application treats and prevents for one full year. To find a professional who can apply it, log on to www.nofireants.com.