



City of Westminster

Pest Information

**FREE PHONE:
0800 3580514**

Garden Ants



What do they look like?

The black or garden ant is the most common British ant to enter houses and it is found in almost all parts of the country. The worker is very dark brown, almost black and about 5mm long. The queen, which is rarely seen except for certain months in the summer, is about 15mm long and mid-brown in colour.

Where do they live?

The queen makes the nest in the soil, in grassed areas beneath paving and patios and sometimes in hollow trees. The nests are usually outside buildings although sometimes they may be found in the walls or foundations of a house.

What do they eat?

The foraging workers follow well-defined trails to their feeding grounds, which may be many metres from the nest. They enter buildings, often through very narrow crevices, and if one ant finds food, there will soon be many others. Ants foraging for food in houses may cause considerable nuisance to the householder.

How much of a pest are they?

Worker ants will frequently enter dwellings foraging for food, particularly sweet substances. While not a risk to human health, they can be present in sufficient numbers to cause a nuisance the emergence of numerous winged ants (usually on a hot day in summer) can cause alarm to some people, particularly if these 'flying ants' are emerging inside a building. These flying ants are the females leaving the nest to set up new colonies and may be a nuisance but, are harmless and nothing can be done to stop them swarming.

Can I treat them myself?

Yes, there are a number of treatments available for the general public to get rid of garden ants:

Insecticidal dusts

An effective treatment against garden ants and can be purchased from hardware shops, do-it-yourself shops and garden centres. The dust should be puffed lightly into void spaces, cracks and crevices where the nests may be located.

Insecticidal aerosols

Suitable for crawling insects can be used for spraying into cracks and crevices, and for application as a band around skirting boards, door frames, air bricks and other access points. Flying ants can be treated with any aerosol suitable for the control of flying insects.

Bait formulations

These products rely upon worker ants taking the bait back to the nest and sharing it with other ants.

Note: when using pesticides always follow the instructions on the label.

How can I get rid of Garden Ants?

Call City of Westminster Council Pest Control Team **Free Phone 0800 3580514**.

Treatment

Fully trained and qualified council pest control officers will survey the premises; poison bait gels / wet based pesticides will be placed / sprayed in the most appropriate and safe locations. The type of pesticide and how it works will be explained to you by the officer. You will be issued a **Notice to Occupier** form detailing which poisons have been left in the property; keep this in a safe place for reference for emergency services should the need arise. You may also be given advice on house-keeping which may assist the treatment. Any follow up appointments will be arranged with you at the end of each visit.

Post Treatment

Most Garden Ant treatments work by making the ants infertile which prevents the increase and spread of the colonies or, attack the nervous system in the ants killing them. Some treatments have an attractant and you will see an increase in activity around the treated areas which is perfectly normal. Do not try to kill these ants yourself as this will prevent the treatment from reaching the nest and subsequent spread of the treatment to the remaining colonies. The increase in activity may occur for a short period after each treatment. Depending on the circumstances most Garden Ant infestations take between a few days to two weeks to control.