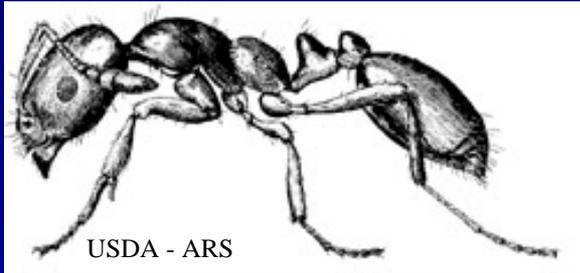


# Module 9: Management of Ants in Child Care Settings



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Integrated Pest Management for  
Child Care Settings



# Ants

- All ants are social insects that live in large organized colonies, usually underground.
- Ants are recognized by their tiny waist and elbowed antennae.
- Ants sometimes have wings.
- Many types of ants invade buildings for food, water and shelter.
- We will focus on a few types.

# Ants in Child Care Centers

- Ants are the most common indoor-invading pest.
- Some ants may transfer germs.
- Some ants may bite and/or sting.
- Ants are a nuisance and unpleasant.

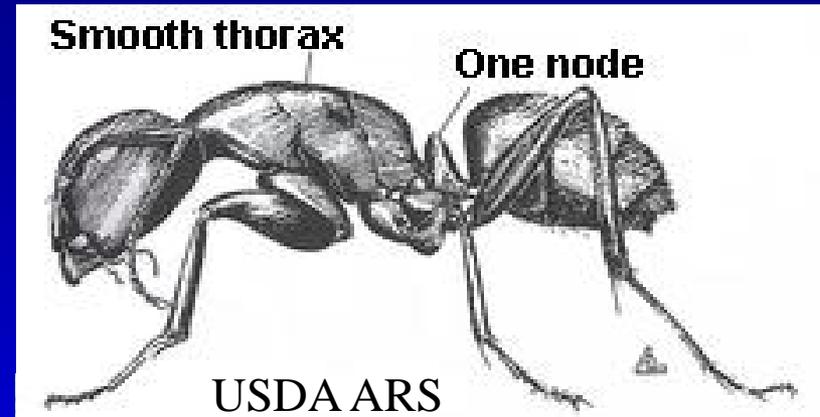


# Carpenter ants

- Carpenter ants are the largest ants one will see.
- They wander into structures seeking food and water, like other nuisance ants.
- They also create nests in structures, especially around moisture damaged wood.
- Carpenter ants can cause serious structural damage.

# Carpenter ants

- Variable black, brown, and/or red colors
- Many sizes of workers in one colony, up to 1" long.
- Queens and males will have wings.



# Carpenter ants

- One main colony with up to 8 satellite colonies.
- Main colony is usually not in the structure.
- Mostly active at night.
- They do not eat wood.
- They excavate wood to make a nest.
- Termites eat wood.



# Carpenter ants

- Colonies may grow large within structures.
- Signs of infestation include workers, sawdust, winged adults.
- Carpenter ants love sweets but feed on other insects, too.



Carpenter ant debris pile, including ant parts and wood shavings.  
Univ. Nebraska

# Carpenter ants

- They may indicate a structural problem, like moisture damaged wood or a leaking roof.
- Cause problems in structures because they damage wood and forage in kitchen and bathroom areas.
- Not all that dangerous, but you should avoid children's exposure to these ants.

# Carpenter ant management

- Inspect building perimeter for trails, entryways, sawdust, winged adults, rotten wood.
- Identify moist or damaged wood to be fixed.
- Move scrap wood and debris away from foundation.



# Carpenter ant management

- Seal small openings on outside of building.
- Cut vegetation back by 12” from building.

This planting along the foundation will encourage ants and other pests.



# Carpenter ant management

- Call a pest management professional (PMP) if carpenter ants are frequently being seen inside the building.
- Damage can be costly.
- The PMP will try to locate and physically remove the colony.

# Carpenter ant management

- The PMP should use carpenter ant baits along trails or low-toxic dusts in voids.
- Pesticides are not needed to kill wandering ants inside the building.
- Pesticide sprays and ant baits should never be used together. Baits become unattractive to the ants when sprayed with chemicals.

# Smaller ants

- Little black ant, odorous house ant, pharaoh ant, thief ant plus many more.
- Some are small  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch long
- Others are very tiny ants,  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch.
- Invade buildings for food, moisture, to avoid bad conditions (rain, drought, heat, cold).
- Some will make colonies indoors but do not cause wood damage.



# Problems with small ants

- They forage in food, food prep areas, sinks, kitchens and countertops.
- They are a nuisance.
- Some may carry food-borne illness and other human diseases.



# Control ants indoors

- Don't give them a reason to come in!
- Sanitation is ant control – Eliminate their food and water.



# Build them out

- The best control for ants is to prevent them from entering in the first place.
- Build them out by closing gaps, holes and other entryways.
- This may require someone to pay very close attention to the movements of ants in and out of the building.
- Have a flashlight handy and spend some extra time.

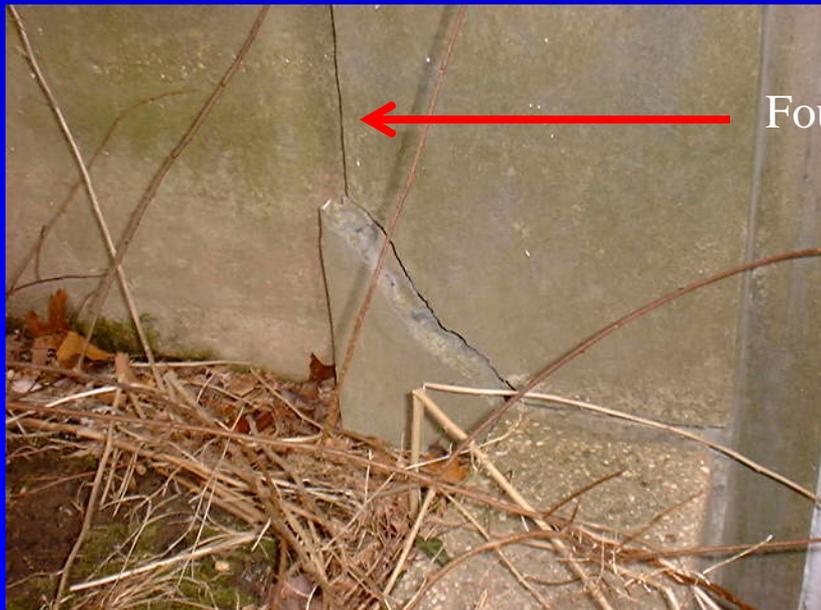
# Small ant management

- Inspect indoor and outdoor perimeter to locate activity.
- Look at areas with heating, plumbing and food.
- Remove objects around perimeter that harbor ants, including wood debris, leaf litter and trash.



# Small ant management

- Seal cracks and crevices where ants gain entry.
- Foundations can be sealed with concrete patch.



Foundation cracks



# Seal around windows and doors

- Use a weather-proof sealant to close gaps around windows and doors.



# Don't use over-the-counter sprays and foggers

- Over-the-counter sprays and foggers do not belong in child care centers.
- They are not compatible with baits.
- They are dangerous to children's health.



# When needed – call a PMP

- The PMP can offer a baiting program for small nuisance ants.
- Ant baits are effective, but “trial and error” may be needed to identify the ants’ preference.

Sweets?



Or protein?



# When needed – call a PMP

- Types of baits include gel and paste from tube applicators and granular (tiny pieces) baits.
- PMP will place baits along undisturbed trails.
- Do not contaminate baits with pesticides.



Liquid bait. Photo by  
EA deAngelis OSU



Carpenter ants feeding on granular bait.  
Photo from [pestcontrolsupplies.com](http://pestcontrolsupplies.com)

# When needed – call a PMP

- Some types of ants may require extensive baiting over time.
- Baiting programs must be regularly maintained with fresh baits.
- Baiting may take time to eliminate a colony.

# Take Away Messages

- Ants are common and mainly a nuisance, except carpenter ants which cause structural damage.
- The best control methods are removing food, water and shelter.
- To prevent ants we must try to build them out of our homes and buildings.
- Professionally applied baits are appropriate for child care centers.