

PUBLIC PROTECTION – ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICE

Pest advice - Garden ants**What do they look like?**

The black or garden ant is the most common British ant to enter houses and is found in most 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 soil, 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.

Pest status

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 may be a nuisance, but they are harmless and nothing can be done to stop them swarming.

Control measures:

- Insecticidal dusts are an effective treatment against garden ants and can be purchased from hardware shops, DIY 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 rely upon worker ants taking the bait back to the nest and sharing it with other ants.

Professional treatment

Powys County Council does not undertake treatment for ants.

Commercial pest control companies are listed on the internet, in the Yellow Pages and Thompson's Local Directory.