

Imported Fire Ants

Imported fire ants were accidentally introduced to the Southeast United States from South America years ago. Now it has moved westward to California and beyond. Fire ants are a nuisance and medical pest. They interfere with outdoor activities, hurt wildlife and can affect land values. Imported fire ants are identified by two petiole nodes (see image 1) and a stinger (see image 2).

Their mound can also be an indicator (see image 3). As seen in image 4, the mound has no entrance on the top of the mound, it is off to the side of the mound. The area directly below the mound is where the ants all live, that's why the mound is one area of attack. When the mound is disturbed, (see image 5) the ants will swarm. Many sizes of ants can appear at the same time (see image 6). Oh yeah, they sting (see image 7) that is followed by burning, pain, itching and finally forms a blister.

Control

Many people think fire ant control is impossible, but the key to effective control is to use a combination or control methods and alternate chemicals among methods. Below are three methods and the products to rotate with.

Broadcast Treatment: In turf this should be done twice a year, rotate between *HY Turf Ranger II* and *HY Bug Blaster II*. Once per year may be acceptable when few fire ants are present.

Mound Treatment: Apply to the mound without disturbing the mound, unless instructed to. Granular mound treatments include; *HY Fire Ant Granules*, *HY Fire Ant Control w/Acephate*, *HY Multi-Use Dust* and *HY Vegetable & Ornamental*, these last two can be used in the garden. Drench mound treatment include; *HY 38 Plus* and *FLG Spinosad*. This is considered organic so can be used in the garden.

Bait Treatment: the only one of these that would be considered a bait is *FLG Come and Get It!* This is also organic so can be used in the garden. Spinosad is very fast at controlling foraging ants, you will see dying ants in 24 hours, for mound control it takes 2 applications 14 days apart.

