

Abigail L. Gremillion, Louisiana State University



## When Are Argentine Ants Seen in Louisiana?

Argentine ants become a problem for home owners year round. These ants can be seen entering houses because their main food sources, nectar and honeydew, become scarce. Keeping the ants away from your home should not have to break the bank.



Figure 1. The Argentine Ant, *Linepithema humile*  
(Photograph by Michael Seymour)

## Store Your Food Smart and Starve the Ants

Argentine ants are attracted to sweet, sugary, or protein rich food. Keep food stored in glass jars or in plastic containers with tight-fitting lids. Argentine ants are attracted to sweet, starchy, and protein-rich food (Davidson 2001).

Teflon animal food and water bowls will keep ants from getting into your animal's food (Davidson 2001). You can find Teflon products at camping stores or on the Internet.



Figure 2. Store food in plastic or glass containers.



Figure 3. Argentine Ants Trailing Into a Residential Dwelling  
(Photography by Linda M. Hooper-Búi)

## Soap and Water Wash Away the Ants!

When you see ants beginning to enter your house, take soap and water and wipe up the ants. Not only will you catch the ants, you will wash away their scent trail.

Scent trails give ants a "map" to invade your house. If you wash away the trail, ants will not invade your house.

If you see ant trails during winter, follow the trail to the nest. Killing the nest can be easy as pouring boiling water on it, but be warned that the ants may try to bite (Argentine AntFact sheet: Let's Stop the Invasion 2002).

## Beautify Your Home and Keep the Ants Away!

Keep raised mulch flowerbeds away from your house to prevent ant invasions (Búi 2005).

Red cedar chips are showing promise to kill argentine ants. If cedar chips are used, reapply cedar oil to the chips once every 3 months. Reapplication is encouraged during drought, flooding and hurricanes.

Eliminate harborage for Argentine ants such as boat seats, overturned canoes or kayaks, dead stumps or felled trees, children's toys, free-standing basketball nets, woodpiles, and lawn tools. These items can provide extra heat for the ants, which will promote more colonies to occur in your yard (Búi 2005).

Trim plants and trees so that they do not touch residential dwellings (Argentine Ant Fact sheet: Let's Stop the Invasion 2002).

Eliminate rotting wood or siding from dwellings to keep ants from colonizing within your home's structure (Búi 2005).

Prevent contact with the ground with wood products. This will keep Argentines out and prevent termite infestations (Búi 2005).

Caiking cracks with caulk that contains insecticide can keep ants from invading your home. It also helps reduce the cost of heating and cooling your home (Davidson 2001).

If your property is large, use hay bails as bait to attract the ants away from your home. Then burn or freeze the hay bail to kill the ants (Cultural Control of Argentine Ants 2005).



Figure 4. Use soap and water to wash away ants and their trails.

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