PEST IDENTIFICATION
& TREATMENT

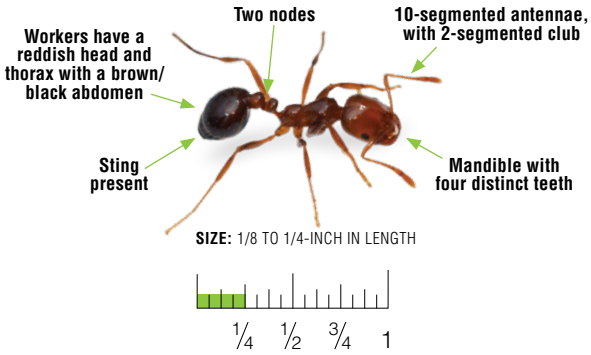
ANT SPECIES

Red Imported Fire Ant (RIFA) Protocol

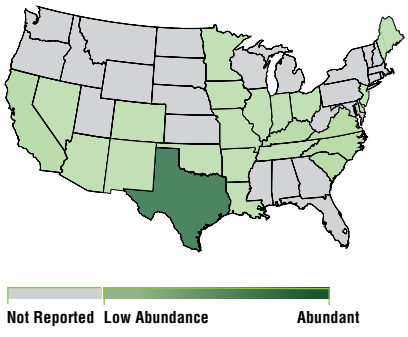
Understanding Red Imported Fire Ants

- RIFAs are native to tropical areas in Central and South America. They were introduced to the southeastern United States between 1930-1950 and occur throughout the Gulf States and in irrigated environments in the southwestern United States.
- Though RIFAs rarely invade indoor environments, workers are highly aggressive and can inflict multiple painful stings.
- RIFAs are specialists at exploiting disturbed habitats, especially landscaped urban environments, golf courses, parks and schools.
- In areas that frequently flood, RIFA colonies will build living rafts, with queen(s) and brood protected within the mass of workers.
- RIFA colonies can have either a single queen (monogyne) or multiple queens (polygyne), depending on their genetic makeup. Monogyne colonies are typically more aggressive towards other ants, while polygyne colonies do not generally attack other foreign polygyne workers.

Identification



Range



Data Sources: iNaturalist & iDigiBio

Inspection

- Locating nests is the key to control. Keep in mind that the multiple-queen (polygyne) social form often constructs continuous nests across a landscape, where the single-queen (monogyne) social form builds distinct dome-shaped dirt mounds farther apart.
- Outdoor, RIFAs invade lawns, school yards, athletic fields, golf courses, parks, pavement cracks, electrical equipment, gardens, bark mulch, roadside right-of-ways and other disturbed habitats.
- Although established indoor nests are rare, large exterior populations may invade wall voids and crawlspaces.

Customer Communication

Setting appropriate expectations and communicating the importance of customer collaboration increases the likelihood of success. Be sure to communicate what to expect before and after the treatment and any conducive conditions that require remediation. Best results are seen when the technician and the customer work together. Below are some key things to communicate to the customer:

- For indoor control: Stress the importance of sanitation to your customers. Any type of food or food particles can attract ants. Recommend the customer store food in sealed containers.
- For outdoor control: Discuss the removal of plants that can attract ants; or control aphids, whiteflies and other honeydew-producing insects on plants in and around structures.
  - Trim trees and other landscape features that serve as routes ants can use to enter buildings and homes.

Pre-Treatment

- Use your inspection results to determine your treatment plan. Treatment should be based on nest location.
- Ensure all equipment is clean and in good working condition to avoid product contamination that could negatively impact results.
- Always read and follow label instructions and make sure you have all of the required PPE prior to treatment.

MGK®

Treatment / Liquid Applications

- **Treatment for RIFAs nesting on the interior of structures:** Although rare, RIFAs will occasionally nest indoors in potted plants or atriums. For ants nesting indoors, remove infested soil or apply Sumari® Insecticide directly at a dilution rate of 1 oz. per gallon of water.
- **Treatment for RIFAs nesting on the exterior and foraging/trailing into structures:**
  - **Interior:** RIFAs will trail indoors in search of food and water or during extreme weather conditions. To control ants foraging indoors, apply Sumari® Insecticide as a spot or crack and crevice application at a dilution rate of 1 oz. per gallon of water. Key areas include around baseboards, doors, window frame, under sinks, around pipes and attic venting.
  - **Exterior:** Apply Sumari® Insecticide at a dilution rate of 2 oz. per gallon of water for residual control around the perimeter of the structure. Key areas include entryways, doors and windows, utility entry points, in gardens and mulched flower beds, in or around expansion joints and other areas where RIFAs may be nesting. Use broadcast or spot and/or crack and crevice applications anywhere ants are found trailing. Curative or proactive broadcast treatments can be made to yards, lawns, fields, parks, cemeteries and landscaping.
- **Treatment for RIFAs found only on the exterior:** Treat nests and mounds by applying Sumari® Insecticide as a proactive broadcast treatment, spot and/or crack and crevice application. Apply at a dilution rate of 2 oz. per gallon of water.

Treatment / Baiting Applications

- **Treatment for RIFAs nesting on the interior of structures:** Although not usually necessary, granular bait applications may be made in accordance with their respective labels.
- **Treatment for exterior RIFA nest locations:**
  - Broadcast application of granular fire ant baits may be made to lawns, school yards, athletic fields, golf courses, parks, pavement cracks, electrical equipment, gardens, bark mulch, roadside right-of-ways and other disturbed habitats. Applications must be made according to the label.

Post-Treatment

- Re-inspect if ant activity has not ceased after 3-5 days. Make note of any continued activity or foraging, even if ants aren't found on the interior of a structure. Re-treat any areas with such activity to reduce the likelihood of re-infestation.

Tips and Tricks from the MGK Technical Department

You can't win the war. Fire ants cannot be eliminated because it's not possible to treat all infested areas. Focus on winning key battles throughout the year to keep the number of mounds low.

Two-step with them. You can significantly reduce the number of mounds on a property by applying baits once or twice a year and treating remaining mounds directly. For fully infested areas (five or more mounds for each quarter-acre), the Texas AgriLife Extension service recommends the Texas Two-Step Method:

1. Apply granular baits in the late afternoon/evening when the ground is dry and rain isn't expected. Baits will be taken back to mounds and hopefully kill queens and brood.
2. Treat individual mounds that survive the bait application.

Pay attention to direction. Look for trailing ants. If foragers are moving solid food away from the structure, focus your inspection outdoors. If foragers are moving solid food into the structure, focus on the interior or crawlspace.

Don't make the nest move. RIFAs are highly mobile. They can move the entire nest within a few hours. Treatments using the wrong product can result in colonies moving into untreated areas. Don't disturb a RIFA mound to determine if it is active, this could cause the nest to move.

Do not disturb. Always apply granular bait around the mound. Workers are not likely to forage for bait that is directly on top of the mound. That can be considered a threat to the colony and workers could discard the bait.

Products

Sumari® Insecticide

- Kills and controls ants, including multi-queen species, for up to three months
- Contains NyGuard® IGR insect growth regulator
- Dual modes of action
- For indoor and outdoor use, including outdoor broadcast
- No signal word
- Apply as an outdoor broadcast treatment up to four times per year at the low rate
- Convenient all-in-one product

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Rev. 0820