
PAPER 2

A VIEW OF THE FUTURE ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

ANTS

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In the year 2000, 40% of the world's people will be living in cities and more than 80% of the population growth during this time will occur in urban areas. The impact of household insects such as ants on humans in the urban environment will be even greater than it is today.

There are more than 20 species of ants that will infest households in the United States and probably twice this number throughout the world. However, the pest ants that cause the most problems in the U. S. generally belong to the following genera: *Camponotus*, *Linepithema* [*Iridomyrmex*] *Monomorium*, *Paratrechina*, *Pheidole*, *Solenopsis*, *Tapinoma*, *Tetramorium*, and *Wasmannia*.

Ants can cause numerous problems in the urban environment. Their mere presence in peoples homes causes annoyance and undue stress, the possibility of contamination by spreading pathogens and diseases is always present, some can inflict painful stings that can be life-threatening to hypersensitive individuals, and some cause damage to wooden structures, roofs, and electrical equipment.

The habits of many urban pest ants make most control techniques utilizing sprays and dusts ineffective because these treatments usually kill only foraging workers but do not eliminate the colonies. Although the use of toxic baits is one of the best methods to control urban pest ants, there is still a need for developing new and more attractive bait formulations and biorational methods of control.

Future issues that we will certainly face will be to maintain and conduct research with less funds, but continue to find answers to questions in basic research and behavior which will lead to new ideas for control. For example, we need to develop baits that can work against multiple pest ant species, especially those that occur in dwellings, while at the same time develop species-specific ant baits for use against those widespread, damaging outdoor pest ants such as the imported fire ant. The development of biological control and other methods that have less negative impact on the environment should be a high priority. We still have many unanswered questions in areas such as foraging behavior, nutrition,