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Struggling to complete your pest control correspondence NQF level 4 course? Even if you have only completed 1 or 2 modules, why not contact us?

If you're having trouble controlling indoor nuisance ants, take a look at your client's landscaping. It's well known that there is an outside ant-aphid connection that can contribute to indoor ant problems as well. Ants like sugary foods, at least at certain times. A primary source of the sweets that ants crave are plant aphids. These soft-bodied insects suck plant juices (nectar) and exude from their anus a sticky droplet called "honeydew." Honeydew is high sugar, energy-rich food and ants will go to great lengths to obtain it. It's not just aphids; other plant-feeding insects like mealybugs, whiteflies, and scale insects also produce honeydew.

About 75% of our common pest ants have some association with aphids. Some of the pest ants that actively feed on honeydew are the Argentine ant, carpenter ant, ghost ant and white-footed ant.

Ants protect herds of Aphids in exchange for a honeydew reward

Certain ant species rely so heavily on their honeydew fix that they become aphid farmers. They actually herd and "milk" their aphids by stroking them with their antennae to get them to release a honeydew droplet. Some aphids even lose the ability to poop, unless stroked by an ant! When the aphids develop winged forms as part of their life cycle, the ants chew the wings off so they can keep their "cows" nearby. Do the aphids mind? Apparently not, since the system is beneficial for them as well. Although the aphids are totally dependent on the ants, the ants protect them from predators such as lady beetles. They move their aphid herds to new plant sources to keep the honeydew flowing. In winter, some ants move their aphid cows into their ground colony and then carry them back to their plant hosts in the spring.



How do Aphids affect Ant infestations?

When ants are farming aphids, populations of both tend to increase dramatically. When ants are tending aphids near a structure, the ants may start to forage into the home or building as well, especially if the honeydew supply declines.

Check shrubs and flowering plants around your client's foundation. Learn what aphids look like. Aphids usually cluster along the stem or the undersides of leaves. You'll see ants with them or moving up and down the stems.

Sometimes an indoor ant problem can be eliminated by simply treating outdoor plants for aphids (you may need an ornamental pest control license). Conversely, controlling ants may also eliminate aphids on ornamental plants as they will lose their protective benefactors.

PEST CONTROL TRAINING ACADEMY / SCHOOL

Professional Services Offered:

Training of pestcontrol operators | Practical assessments of pest control operators | mentoring of pest contro; operators | supervision of trainee pest control operators | pest control helpline | pest identification services | food safety/HACCP training and auditing | food safety/PRP registers | ISPM 15 training and certification | green pest management/control | pest management operations manuals

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