

# Protecting Your Family And Pets From Fire Ants

(NAPSA)—Imported red fire ants overrun the majority of Southern United States, from Texas and Oklahoma to Florida, Georgia and the Carolinas. Each year, they expand farther north. Nearly 40 percent of people in fire ant-infested areas get stung each year, according to the United States Department of Agriculture.

Fire ants are extremely territorial insects and horde in clusters to protect their mounds, queens and their territories. On average, a fire ant colony hosts up to 100,000 worker ants and a queen. When fire ants are disturbed, they inflict a painful bite and sting, which causes a small blister or pustule on the skin, which can appear up to 24 to 48 hours later.

## Be Prepared

The following first-aid guidelines can help if you or a family member is attacked:

- Seek medical attention immediately if there are signs of an allergic reaction. They include severe swelling, shortness of breath, dizziness, nausea, headaches and sweating.
- If blisters occur, make sure they are clean and avoid any action that might further irritate the area.
- Rinse the sting area with cold water and gentle soap to avoid infection.
- Elevate the affected area of the body and use a cool compress or ice to reduce swelling and alleviate pain and itching.

If your pet is attacked, quickly remove the animal from the infested area and wipe off the fire ants, using a glove or brush. Be careful not to spray your pet with water, as this only aggravates fire ants, causing them to bite and then sting repeatedly. Pets also can suffer from allergic reactions, so watch for unusual behavior.

## Preventing Fire Ant Infestation

Remember, fire ants are most active in the spring. There are two



**Fire ants can be both a nuisance and a danger. Preventing these pests is your best defense.**

common approaches for effectively preventing fire ants. For large yards and early-season prevention, use a broadcast treatment to treat the entire yard. For smaller areas, where visible mounds are present, use a mound treatment directly around individual mounds.

For the most comprehensive control, especially in the case of severe infestation, experts recommend a Two-Step Method using both broadcast and mound treatments. With a Two-Step Method, first use a broadcast spreader to treat your entire lawn with Over 'n Out Fire Ant Killer or AMDRO FireStrike. Then, treat particularly stubborn mounds you see with AMDRO Fire Ant Bait to eliminate fire ant activity in as little as one week. Used together, these treatments provide season-long control.

“Eliminating ants, particularly on individual properties, can be frustrating because colonies from neighboring untreated properties can quickly reinvade areas cleared of ants,” says Bart Drees, professor of entomology, extension specialist, and Regents Fellow department of entomology at Texas A&M University. “Working with your neighbors to treat larger areas—such as city blocks—improves control by reducing reinvansion of these larger treated areas.”