

HINTS FOR HOMEOWNERS

Warm Weather Home Invaders

(NAPSA)—They come into your house uninvited and unannounced, terrorize your home, and take whatever they want for their own gain.

No, it's not time to start building a panic room. These invaders aren't burglars—at least, not the human kind. They're ants.

When the weather is warm, homeowners are more likely to see the creepy crawlers around the kitchen and anywhere else there's a food source.

Ranging from merely annoying to downright deadly, some of the most common ant varieties include:

- **Odorous House Ants.** They get their name from the unpleasant odor they give off when crushed. You're most likely to find these in your home during rainy weather, when they'll nest in wall voids and crevices. They prefer sweet foods.

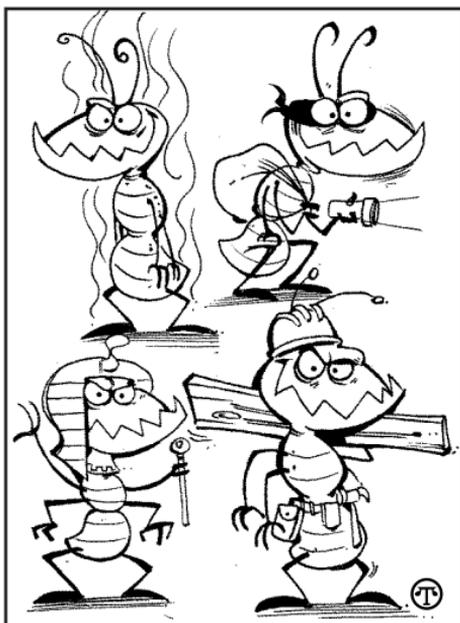
- **Pharaoh Ants.** Pharaoh Ants also prefer sweet foods, and live in extremely large colonies. When indoors, they keep warm near indoor heating sources.

- **Argentine Ants.** Argentine Ants have the least discriminating of ant palates. They eat nearly anything. They generally nest in moist soil.

- **Thief Ants.** These ants are so small that they're hard to see. During warm weather is when you'll most often find them in your house. Unlike many other household ants, they prefer to eat proteins.

- **Carpenter Ants.** So called because they hollow out their nests from wood. Carpenter Ants usually come into buildings through cracks around doors, windows, or through exterior holes for plumbing, electric wires, TV cables, or phone lines.

- **Fire Ants.** These unrelenting predators deliver a painful, burning sting. At least 32 deaths in the U.S. can be attributed to severe allergic reactions to fire ant stings each year. Fire ants can chew through the insulation around electrical wiring and



Ranging from merely annoying to outright deadly, ant invaders can be easier to get rid of with professional pest control.

have also been known to kill small animals.

They currently infest 14 states throughout the Southeastern U.S. and have been spreading since the 1950s.

"There are as many ways to treat ants as there are species," says Cindy Mannes, director of public affairs for the National Pest Management Association (NPMA), near Washington, D.C. "Because some ants eat grease, others prefer seeds, other insects or leftovers from dinner, proper identification is a critical part of treatment."

That's where the help of a professional comes in. A pest control professional can identify your particular pests, treat to remove them and recommend steps homeowners can take to prevent reinfestation.

Professional pest control is important because the untrained eye often cannot always recognize the damage pests cause.

For further information, NPMA provides a national online referral service for homeowners to find a pest control professional on its Web site at www.pestworld.org.