

Garden ant fact sheet

Black ants are common in all parts of the UK. They usually nest outdoors favouring sandy or dry soils near house foundations and under paths. They are also increasingly found in cavity walls of properties.



Worker ants invade buildings foraging for food, particularly of a sweet nature. They enter buildings through tiny crevices under kitchen units, skirting boards or anywhere there is a gap big enough for an ant. When an ant finds a food source other ants will soon join them, sometimes in large quantities.

Once established and due to the location of the nest a colony can be difficult to eradicate 100%. Nests in most cases are impossible to locate.

During late summer flying male and queen ants can be seen swarming (flying ants). Ants mate on the wing and can swarm for a few hours. They are a nuisance for a short time and can be dealt with immediately, using a suitable flying insect spray. They can also be vacuumed up, if occurring indoors.

Dealing with ants

If the nest can be located it can be destroyed using ant powder or ant spray. If the nest cannot be found (most cases) then you can use various treatments. There are powders, sprays and gels available at most garden centres and DIY stores. The powders should be used outdoors around your property in cracks and crevices, airbricks and other entry points to create a barrier to exclude ants.

Water based sprays can be used inside your home e.g. kitchens, fireplaces or wherever you see ants. Spray all around the edges of a room and leave to dry. Continuous treatment may be needed for a few weeks to eliminate ants. Ant colonies will not be eliminated overnight. **Ants will still be seen after treatment**, as the ants must walk across the sprayed area to kill them.

Ant gels and liquids are also available, these are poisons with a sweet base to trick the ant into feeding and carry the bait back to the nest. However treatment must be continuous for several weeks and ant sprays and powders should not be used with these products or you will simply kill the ant before the ant gets to the nest.