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Ways to take care of your fire ant problem



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Special to
Pelahatchie News

There are a number of ways to treat fire ants, including:

1. Granular Baits:

When properly applied, granular fire ant baits are low cost; quick and easy to apply; safe to pets, children, and are very effective, giving up to 80% control. Baits are "fire ant-edible" granules containing low doses of slow-acting insecticides or insect growth-disruptors that are applied by spreading them over the lawn. Foraging fire ant workers collect these granules and carry them back to the mound, to feed to the young fire ants. Depending on the product, it can take two to six weeks to see the full benefit of a bait treatment, but patience

and persistence will pay off. Broadcast a granular fire ant bait over your lawn three to four times a year: around Easter, around Independence Day, and around Labor Day, and you won't have very many fire ants in your yard.

2. Dry Mound Treatments. This is the most convenient way to kill individual fire ant mounds. Keep a can of dry mound treatment on hand to spot-treat mounds you see while you work in the yard. As you find fire ant mounds, just sprinkle the labeled amount of the product over the mound and walk away. Treatments that contain acephate smell terrible but work great, killing most mounds in just a few days. Treatments containing deltamethrin or beta-cyfluthrin don't smell as bad, but tend to be less effective. The use of a combination of granular baits and dry mound treatments are very effective for fire ant control.

3. Liquid Mound Drenches: This is the fastest way to kill individual fire ant mounds. Drench a mound with an appropriate rate of permethrin, bifenthrin or other labeled product, and all ants contacted by the drench will quickly die. Remember to thoroughly soak the mound, one gallon for small mounds, two gallons for large mounds.

4. Broadcast Insecticide Sprays: Primarily used on golf courses and other commercial turf, broadcast sprays contain ingredients such as bifenthrin, permethrin, or cyfluthrin. Sprays kill exposed ants on contact and then go into the soil, to provide residual control of foraging workers and newly settled queens.

5. Broadcast insecticide Granules: These include granular insecticides containing active ingredients, such as bifenthrin, gamma-cyhalothrin or cyflu-

thrin, that are applied by simply spreading granules over the yard. Fire ants will not eat these granules. Instead, these insecticides leach into the soil, where they provide residual contact kill of workers and the newly settled queen. Some products give up to 4 months control.

6. Broadcast Fipronil Granule: Fipronil is another broadcast herbicide that is in a class by itself. A single application can give season-long control (the label indicates up to one year). Fipronil can only be applied by licensed commercial applicators and is quite expensive. If you want season long fire ant control with a single treatment and don't mind the expense, this is the way to go. Expect it to take a few weeks to begin working: mounds won't die and disappear overnight.

This information was taken from "Bugs Eye View," MSU-ES.

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