

Ants

Management Tools for a Healthy Learning Environment

When the Ants Come Marching In...

There are over 12,000 species of ants all over the world. In Utah, commonly found species include pavement ants (*Tetramorium caespitum*), field ants (*Formica* species), carpenter ants (*Camponotus* species), harvester ants (*Pogonomyrmex* species.), pharaoh ants (*Monomorium pharaonis*) and odorous house ants (*Tapinoma sessile*).

Where do ants live?

Ants usually nest in soil, but specific nesting habits depend on the species. Ants can be found nesting next to buildings, along sidewalks, and in areas adjacent to bushes and trees. Ants can build nests wherever they find a protected area, including pavement cracks, under buildings, and under rocks and wood. Indoor nesting ants prefer warm, moist locations such as wall voids, under carpets, and near hot water pipes or heating systems.

Why are they in our school?

Ants are usually found in nests outdoors, but enter buildings when in search of food or water. Most ants found in Utah are foragers, meaning they search for food and water to bring back to the established, outdoor colony. Following the line of marching ants may lead you to the nest, which can be eliminated directly. Pharaoh ants and some colonies of pavement and carpenter ants are able to establish permanent colonies indoors.

What do ants eat?

Ants eat fruits, seeds, nuts, fatty/greasy substances, dead or live insects, dead animals, and sweets. Diets may vary by the ant species and by the time of year.



Did You Know?

- Ants use their antennae for touch and also for sense of smell.
- An ant can lift 20 times its own body weight.
- Some queen ants live for years and have millions of young.
- When ants fight, it is usually to the death!
- Ants partake in communal feeding (trophallaxis) which can be used against them during management.

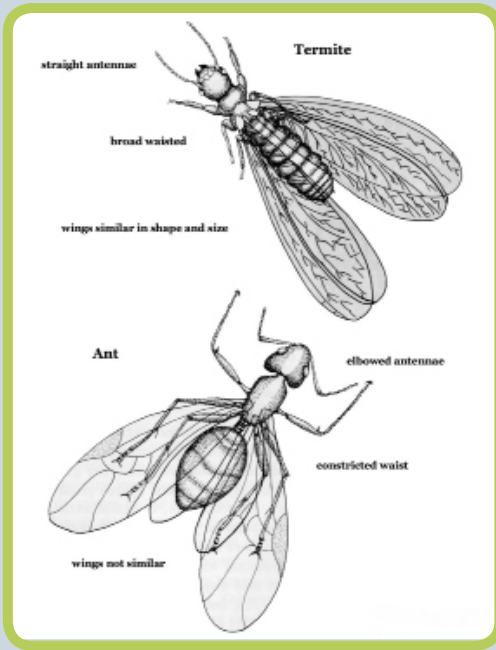


Above:
Adult pavement ant (Joseph Berger, Bugwood.org)



Right:
Adult carpenter ant (Joseph Berger, Bugwood.org)

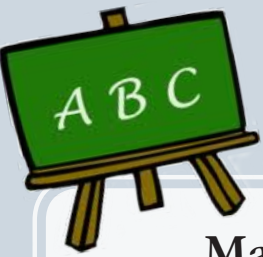
Right:
Ant versus termite (USDA Forest Service Archive, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org)



Ants or Termites?

Ants are easily recognized in their common, wingless adult form but may be mistaken for termites when winged ants leave their colony during warm weather to mate. To determine whether your school is experiencing an ant or termite infestation, refer to the chart below.

Ants	Termites
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Narrow waist• Elbowed antennae• Front wings are noticeably longer than back wings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thick waist• Straight antennae• Both pairs of wings are about the same length



Managing Ants with Integrated Pest Management

- Caulk or seal cracks and crevices around foundations that provide entry from outside.
- Trim branches and limbs of trees and shrubs that touch the building to keep ants from gaining access via these routes.
- Store food in pest-safe containers.
- Clean up spills and dispose of trash often.
- Fix dripping faucets and leaking pipes, because they may be an important water source for ants.
- Provide a dry, vegetation-free border, such as gravel or stones, around the perimeter of building foundations to discourage nest building.
- Manage honeydew-producing insects, such as aphids and whiteflies, on plants near the building. These honeydew producers attract and support large colonies of ants.
- Nests located via inspection can be treated directly with an insecticide. Persistent ants with hidden nests can be treated using ant baits. Be sure to match the bait with ant's feeding preferences and keep out of reach of children.
- If using pesticides, always combine with non-chemical techniques.

For more info, check out:

Key to Identifying Common Household Ants:

<http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/TOOLS/ANTKEY/>

EPA IPM in Schools:

www.epa.gov/pesticides/ipm

Thanks to the University of California IPM for helping compile this information.

