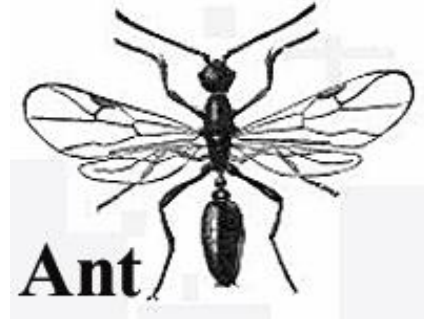
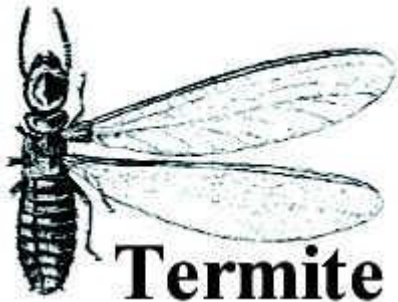


## **Problem:** Termites and Ants



**Description:** Both termites and ants are able to swarm and may have wings during part of their lives. Since these insects are close to the same size, people often misidentify flying ants as termites. Because flying ants do not attack dry wooden structures like termites, it is helpful to be able to tell the difference.

Fortunately, there are several differences that can easily distinguish between the two. For example, ants have a thin waist; the waist of a termite is thick. Also, ants' antennae are elbowed, while termites' are straight. Thirdly, termites have two pairs of wings that are of equal length. Ants also have two pairs of wings, but theirs are of unequal length.

**Recommendations:** Ant home invasions typically start after the weather warms. A few "scout" ants search for food and water. When they find what they are looking for, they will lay down a chemical trail to show others the way. If the homeowner can trace the ants back to a nest, control is simple. Spraying the nest with a labeled insecticide will take care of the problem. Unfortunately, nests are often outside the home and can be extremely difficult to find. Also, ants are so small that finding and caulking all potential entry points is usually not practical. Treating the trails is another tactic that may give temporary relief but normally does not work over the long term; the ants simply find another way.

In the end, homeowners are often left with two strategies: sanitation and baits. Eliminating crumbs, grease, scraps or other food materials will help discourage ant invasions. Ants use the most easily accessible food sources, which leads to use of baits. By using bait materials the ants like, you can trick them into taking the insecticide back to the nest where it is fed to the queen and other members of the colony. Over time the nest will be destroyed.

There are a number of commercially available homeowner formulations that contain both the bait and insecticide and come pre-packaged in a child-resistant station. If ant activity increases around the newly set bait station, do not worry. The insecticides are meant to be slow acting so the product can be transported back to the colony before the worker dies. Unfortunately, not all ants are attracted to the same baits. Also, the food preference of ants may change over time. If one bait product isn't attractive, try another.

Homeowners who find signs of termite activity should shop for a reputable pest control firm.

**References:**

1. [Ants](#), K-State Research & Extension, MF2887
2. [Termites](#), K-State Research & Extension, MF722

**Last Update:** 1/9/2018

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