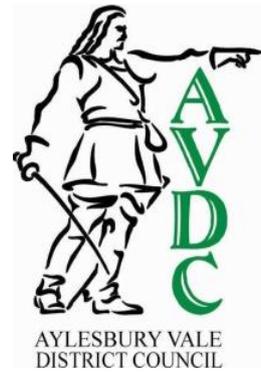


Pest Control Guidelines to prevent infestation from ants



Ants are social insects that live in colonies, most often constructed underground. They send out scouts in search of resources and so are a common household pest. Ants play an important role in the ecosystem: they aerate the soil, break down organic matter and control the population of insects, so it is preferable to control a home infestation rather than destroying the colony entirely. These guidelines will outline ways in which that can be achieved.

Preventing ants

The key to controlling ants and stopping them from taking up residence in your home is to:

- Eliminate ant scent trails – Ants navigate by scent trails, if you spot a scout inside your home you should kill it and wipe the area down with hot, soapy water; this will prevent the scout from returning to the colony and stop others following it. If a trail becomes established, wipe along it with hot, soapy water all the way to the point where the ants are gaining access. Place a block to this access point and remain vigilant for about a week to ensure the ants do not find a way around.
- Seal the ants entrance to your home – There are a variety of things that can be used to discourage ants from entering your home, such as petroleum jelly i.e. Vaseline and chilli powder. For a more permanent blockade, seal cracks and holes with caulk.
- Eliminate the food source – Scouts enter houses in search of food, if a food source is located it will encourage the ants to return en masse, so preventing this is a priority. It can be achieved by keeping food in tightly sealed containers or the refrigerator, by wiping down counters and sweeping floors nightly and by cleaning cabinets, drawers and shelves to remove crumbs daily. Ants also need water, so keep sinks and counters dry to discourage them; this is typically only a problem during hot, dry months. If ants are eating food from your pet's bowl, create a moat around the bowl by placing the food bowl into a pie tin or similar low pan and add soapy water to create a barrier around the bowl.

Extermination

If you feel that methods of prevention have not worked or that an infestation is too severe to be dealt with by any method other than extermination, there are a number of pesticide products that will work on ants and can be purchased from your local supermarket or garden centre.

In serious cases, you may wish to employ the services of a pest control service. There are many private companies that will perform the job for a fee and the Council can offer a [single treatment service](#)

It should be noted that ants are very resilient and no method of extermination can guarantee 100% success. The best method is to be persistent and employ the prevention method outlined above once your home is free from infestation.