



Apply Fire Ant Baits Now for Fewer Mounds Next Spring: There are probably a lot more fire ant mounds in your yard than you think. Fire ants have been swarming all summer and newly mated queens have been landing in your yard and starting new colonies. Although these colonies are not big enough to be noticed now, they will continue to grow, eventually becoming big fire ant mounds. If you don't want to have big fire ant mounds in your yard, you have to treat before you have big fire ant mounds in your yard.

Even large colonies may not be that noticeable right now because when conditions are hot and dry fire ants tend not to build mounds above the grass line. They prefer to keep their brood deep in the soil where it is cooler and moister. Next spring, when the soil is cold and wet, fire ants will actively build their mounds above the grass line so they can capture warmth from the sun, and they will move their brood to these warmer, drier areas of the mound. This is why so many fire ant mounds “pop up” in untreated yards in the spring.

You can reduce the number of fire ant mounds that pop up in your yard next spring by making a broadcast application of fire ant bait this fall, between Labor Day and first frost. Even though fire ant colonies are not as easy to spot in the fall, the workers are foraging actively in preparation for winter and will readily collect bait granules and carry them back to the colony. It is important to apply the bait as a broadcast treatment, rather than just sprinkling bait around the mounds you can see.

The following table lists the bait treatments recommended to control fire ants. Handheld spreaders specifically designed to apply these granular baits are available from the same stores that sell the baits. Buy only enough bait to treat this fall. If you try to save bait through the winter it will likely become rancid and unattractive to fire ants before you can use it next year. Note that rates for most of these products are quite low—only a pound or two per acre in most cases. With rates this low it is easy to waste money by over applying. Baits are designed to be slow-acting, so don't be discouraged if you see active mounds a week or two after you treated. It takes up to two months to see the full benefit of a fire ant bait treatment.

If you do a good job with this fall bait application, you will see a lot fewer mounds in your yard next spring. But don't become complacent. The fire ants will not give up, and, if you want to maintain good fire ant control, you can't either. Don't wait until you start seeing big fire ant mounds again. Apply a spring bait treatment around Easter whether you see any mounds or not. If you live in a rural area, plan on making another application around Independence Day. Labor Day, Easter and Independence Day, let these holidays be your reminder that it is time to apply fire ant bait and you will have a lot fewer fire ant mounds throughout the year.

Baits for Control of Fire Ants in Home Lawns *

Brand Name (insecticide) (% ai)	Rate/acre **
Amdro Fire Ant Bait (hydramethylnon) (0.73%)	1 to 1.5 lb
Award Fire Ant Bait (fenoxycarb) (1.0%)	1 to 1.5 lb
Dupont Advion Fire Ant Bait (indoxacarb) 0.045%	1.5 lb
Spectracide, Fire Ant Killer (indoxacarb) (0.016%)	22 lb
Ferti-lome Come & Get It (spinosad) (0.015%)	2.5 to 5 lb
Distance Fire Ant Bait (pyriproxyfen) (0.5%)	1 to 1.5 lb
Extinguish Professional Fire Ant Bait (methoprene) (0.5%)	1 to 1.5 lb
Extinguish Plus Fire Ant Bait (hydramethylnon) (0.365%) + (methoprene) (0.25%)	2 lb
Ascend Fire Ant Bait (abamectin) (0.011%)	1 lb

*Avoid applying baits immediately before or after irrigation or rainfall.

Baits may require 4 to 8 weeks to provide maximum results.

** There are 43,560 square feet in one acre. (100 ft x 100 ft is a little under ¼ acre)

Control Slugs around Lettuce and Strawberry Beds: Slugs are pests of many plants, but they are a particular problem in lettuce and strawberry beds. Although strawberries will not be ready until next spring, now is the time to start thinking about slug prevention. Once strawberries start ripening it is too late to start a meaningful slug control effort. This is even more important with lettuce—no one wants to find a slug in their salad!

The first step in controlling slugs is to minimize places where they can hide during the day. Slugs are active at night and take refuge in dark, moist places during the day: under rocks or boards; under mulch, leaf litter or other refuse; in structural cracks or crevices; and similar places. By limiting the number of potential refuges you limit the number of slugs that can live in an area.

Although slugs can be trapped in shallow containers of beer, this method is time consuming. Specially formulated slug baits are the most effective way to control slugs, especially around larger plantings. Most slug baits contain one of two active ingredients: metaldehyde (Ortho Bug-Getta and Deadline Bug Bait are two examples) or iron phosphate (Sluggo and Bonide Slug Magic are two examples). Effectiveness of these two ingredients is similar. Baits containing iron phosphate are safer for use around pets and children and are labeled for application in edible crops, such as lettuce and strawberries, as well as other vegetables. Metaldehyde baits can be used “around” vegetables, but should not contact edible parts of plants. Be sure to read the label before applying bait.

Because slugs are active at night, especially under moist, humid conditions, the best time to apply slug bait is late afternoon or early evening after a rain, or after watering the area. Remember, slugs don’t move very fast, which means they do not travel very far from their refuge areas. Place baits accordingly. Many species of slugs overwinter as adults or partly grown immatures, so the more you can control this fall, the fewer you will have next spring. Reduce slug numbers and keep them low by making a few bait applications this fall and treating again next spring.

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This information is for educational and preliminary planning purposes only. Brand names mentioned in this publication are used as examples only. No endorsement of these products is intended. Other appropriately labeled products containing similar active ingredients should provide similar levels of control. Always read and follow the insecticide label.