

# Honeydew:

## The Key to Successful Long-term Ant Control



Most common pest ants effecting homes have a symbiotic relationship with plant sucking insects such as aphids, mealy bugs and scales. The ants provide protection from insect predators and transportation to fresh feeding sites. In return, the excretion from these insects called 'honeydew' serves as a food source for the ants.

Most of these pest ants have adapted to honeydew as a primary food source. In the case of Argentine ants, the esophagus of the worker ant is constricted and the ant cannot ingest solid food. These workers can ingest three times more honeydew than they need and will share the extra two thirds with other members of the colony. This sharing is called 'trophallaxis' and allows for the entire colony to share in a food source.

This sharing allows us to introduce a very mild, slow-acting toxicant into our 'synthetic honeydew' bait, Gourmet Liquid Ant Bait® [GLAB]. We use Boron as the Active Ingredient [AI]. Boron is a naturally occurring element and can be found in the soil at concentrations higher than the concentration used in GLAB. When the bait is consumed by the workers the Boron is transferred throughout the colony. Boron effects the insect gut lining and prevents the absorption of food. It does not effect the nervous system, as most other insecticides do. When Boron's full effects are felt, the queen(s) and the colony die.

Killing the queen is essential to getting sustained ant control. In most ant colonies, as few as 10% of the colony may be foraging for food. Ants can forage for food for up to 300 yards from the nest. Most sprays and granules only effect foraging workers. The workers that are killed can be replaced in a matter of weeks. However, when the queen and the colony are killed, it can take many months and even years for a new ant colony to move in and reinfest the area.

Using baits in outdoor bait reservoirs, such as the Antopia® 6 Outdoor Refillable Bait Station, can keep the bait fresh for an entire season, protect the environment from harmful chemicals and prevent beneficial insects from being harmed by insecticide sprays. The Antopia® 6 Outdoor Refillable Bait Station can be used around gardens to protect fruits, vegetables and ornamental plants.

The pesticide never touches the plants. The ants that are farming the aphids and scales are killed, and beneficial insects can control these damaging pests.

Using gel baits with a faster acting AI or with a higher concentration of Boron, such as Gourmet Ant Bait Gel® (6% Disodium Octaborate Tetrahydrate) can provide control of foragers indoors where the customer needs immediate relief. These gel baits can be placed in cracks and crevices or into small bait stations such as the Ant Café® or Bug Bar® Refillable bait stations. Gel baits can dry out and become difficult to remove from cracks. The refillable bait stations keep the gel bait fresh longer and relieve the problem of removing old baits.

Killing the ant colony with honeydew bait can give the customer many months, and sometimes years, of relief. Killing the colony can be more cost effective than call backs that repeat the harvesting of the foragers. Killing the colony with targeted bait applications is also good for the environment. Chemicals are not released into the air or ground water. This 'green treatment method' is the future of effective ant control.



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believes the correct way to do pest control is with the smallest environmental impact possible. This requires:

- Targeting the pests while leaving the pests' natural enemies alone
- Using the least toxic products available
- Using insects' natural behaviors to enhance a program's effectiveness
- Minimizing human and non-target exposure to chemicals whenever practical
- Not putting chemicals into the air/groundwater

IPCP has developed a line of pest control products that uses active ingredients with extremely low toxicity in patented delivery systems that can increase the life of the bait materials and reduce or eliminate environmental contamination.



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