 Argentine Ant Management Hands-On Exercise

This activity was created for the 2009 “Advanced IPM Training for UC Master Gardener” workshop series. The layout has been slightly modified from the original exercise, so if you attended one of the workshops, the activity may not be exactly as you remember. The exercise was designed for a session containing 25 participants and duration of 1 ½ hours. You may choose to modify the format to fit your program. It is important however, to show the 20-minute video before the hands-on activities so that your participants have some background knowledge of the concepts they will later be presenting.

Each hands-on Group activity can be used alone or with the others. Some of the activities require materials that your program may not have or cannot purchase at this time. Please read through the General Layout below and refer to the individual folders for detailed Group activity instructions, materials needed, posters, handouts, and other support documents.

The overall goal of these exercises is to help people learn by having them teach others. Not only will participants learn about ants, they will also get some practice with public speaking. Use the ant video, the Ant Pest Note and the Ant Quick Tip as information resources. Be sure everyone gets copies of the last two items.

**General Layout and Activity Description**

**Duration: 1 hour, 30 minutes**

1. **Introduction to the exercise— (5 minutes)**
   What kinds of questions do you get about ants? (List on poster paper)

2. **View “Managing Argentine Ants Around the Home” video — (30 minutes)**
   a. View video (20 minutes)
   b. Discussion—what new things did people in the group learn from the video?
   c. Questions
   d. Note that this video will be made available to MG programs and is posted on the web. Shorter clips of the video are also on the web for those who don’t wish to watch the entire 20-minute video.

3. **Hands-on activities— (45 minutes)**
   Divide the larger group up into four small groups. Groups A & B should ideally have 7 people, C has 8 people, and D has 3. Each group will be given a set of materials for presenting information about ants and their management. Organize group materials in separately labeled boxes or envelopes (e.g. A-1, A-2, etc.), so each participant can find the materials they need to incorporate
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into the group presentation. Groups will have 10 minutes to prepare a presentation. Each group will then give a 5-10 minute presentation to the larger group. We recommend you have the groups present in alphabetical order. The overall time for the activity will be shortened if you don’t do all four groups. Be sure to keep an eye on the clock and don’t let people ramble on or you will run out of time. Each person should spend no more than 1-2 minutes presenting.

Group A. Ant identification and biology (7 PEOPLE)
A-1 Distinguish termites from ants (poster) 1 PERSON
A-2 General ant identification. Poster with ant body parts showing one node and 2-nodes. Have copies of the table from the ant Pest Note. May wish to have specimens of some ant species to show. Talk about ant odors and which ants bite. 2 PEOPLE
A-3 Ant life cycle and maintaining the colony. Poster with ant life stages. Show sequence of how workers forage and bring back food for colony. 2 PEOPLE
A-4 Where Argentine ants nest. Make a good spot for ants to nest. Provide a tub of soil, a separate packet of mulch, sprinkler head, fake plant, a photo of aphids to stick on the plant, and garden gloves. 2 PEOPLE

Group B. Inspecting and Managing ants in your home and landscape
Group will have a floor plan of a house and landscape on wall. Each participant will have a box of images that they will stick on the plans using tape and explain how that item relates to ants or their management. (7 PEOPLE-- ONE PERSON FOR EACH)
B-1 Places that ants might enter the house: cracks and crevices around windows or doors, sink with dripping pipes underneath, electrical outlet.
B-2 Features that encourage ants outdoors around the foundation: Mulch, sprinkler head, plants, tree branch touching house, dripping air conditioner.
B-3 Items that can increase ant problems in the house: pet food, spills of sugary liquids, open food, garbage pails, house plants: recycling bin with containers not rinsed,
B-4 Outdoors factors favoring ants: compost, ripening fruit, rose bush with lots of aphids on it, food left out after picnic, hummingbird feeder
B-5 Where to inspect: Place flashlight images in numerous locations to illustrate where to inspect, inside and out.
B-6 Nonchemical tools: Place at appropriate locations: sponge, caulk, weather stripping, Tanglefoot, pruning sheers.
B-7 Baits: Use images of indoor baits, gel applicator, KM AntPro stations, and ant stakes, to explain appropriate locations for application.

Group C. Ant management tools
Each participant will be given a box of ant management tools and will explain where and when to use them (if at all).
7 OR 8 PEOPLE (2 PEOPLE FOR EACH SET OF TOOLS—only one needs to present)
C-1 Quick fix tools for an ant invasion: Citrus oil and other oil products, Windex, Aerosol, sponge and soap, Petroleum jelly, Raid or other pyrethroid aerosol (as a “DO NOT USE” item).
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C-2 Nonchemical tools: caulking gun, weather stripping, tree wrap material, Tanglefoot, hummingbird protector, sealed container
C-3 Small prepackaged bait stations—boric acid, fipronil, hydromethylnon—discuss for indoor and outdoor, including gel applicators.
C-4. KMAntPro bait station, other refillable stations and Gourmet bait

Group D. Ant outreach materials
Explain (briefly!) the features of each of these materials and how Master Gardeners would use them in their public education programs. You do not need to review the content---there will not be time! (One person for each—3 PEOPLE)

D-1 Online resources—Pest Note (discuss PDF and web version, video links and ant key)
D-2 Quick Tips—English and Spanish (handout)
D-3 Hiring a Pest Control Company for ants—Ant bookmark, Hiring a Pest Control Company Pest Note. Note that pest control companies have access to more effective products and application methods; know what to expect from professional pest control companies. Choose Pest Control companies that practice IPM—EcoWise Certified, Green Shield, and Green Pro Certified (handout).

4. Wrap up—(5-10 minutes)
Questions and opportunities to look at materials