

ANTS

It's Easy to Chase Ants Out

Ants play a very important role in the earth's natural ecosystems. They remove dead plants and animals and recycle their materials back into the soil. They loosen the soil and bring organic material underground, enriching the soil and promoting the growth of plants.

If you see an ant trail in your home or office do not panic. Most ants won't hurt you, and they are easy to discourage from indoor places by removing whatever attracts them. Poisons are unnecessary and are toxic to humans and pets as well as ants. Don't worry about ants that are outside. If ants are climbing up your tree trunks to access honeydew produced by aphids, either do nothing or spray wash the tree with water to remove the aphids. Do not use sticky commercial products on the trunk to kill the ants when they touch it. Sticky substances will also trap and injure birds and other wildlife.

If you have ants in your home, remove the sources of attraction. The ants will then leave on their own. Keep your kitchen and house clean. Do not have crumbs, garbage, or food accessible to ants. Thoroughly clean up grease and spills. Keep sweet foods in containers that have been washed to remove residues on outer surfaces. Rinse out empty soft drink containers and remove them from the building. Feed pets indoors; then seal and put away leftover pet food.

If you discover an ant trail in your house, here is a step-by-step way to escort the ants out and keep them out:

- 1) Follow the trail, and find where they are entering.**
- 2) Then find where they are going — perhaps to spilled food on the floor or another attractant? (They especially like sugars, syrups, honey, fruit juice, fats, and meat.)**
- 3) Remove the attractant that lured them inside. Without killing any ants, wipe the spot where the attractant used to be completely clean.**
- 4) Be patient. *Wait a few hours or overnight*, and the ants will exit where they entered if you don't have other spilled or**

- accessible food around for them.
- 5) If they are not all gone overnight, with a *very soft* brush you can *gently* sweep any remaining ants into a dustpan and deposit them outdoors without injuring them.
 - 6) After they have left, wipe the path they took with soapy water or equal parts vinegar and water.
 - 7) After the ants are gone deter them from re-entering. On a piece of waxed paper place the following deterrents at the place where the ants entered: drops of peppermint oil, chopped fresh mint, sliced garlic cloves, or shredded lemon peel. Use any one of these repellents or a combination of them.
 - 8) Caulk the openings that the ants came through to enter your house.
 - 9) If you discover ants in a potted houseplant, take the plant outside, and place it in a bucket. Fill the bucket with water that reaches about one inch below the rim of the pot. Make a dry bridge for the ants by laying a stick from the pot to the rim of the bucket so the ants can escape and carry their young to safety. When you no longer see ants leaving over the dry bridge, remove the plant from the bucket and let the water in it drain. Then return the potted plant indoors.

Make your kitchen/house/office ant-unfriendly:

After the ants leave, wash countertops, floor, and cabinet floors with equal parts vinegar and water. When the ants are gone, and your kitchen and other areas are clean, you can also apply Orange Guard, a nontoxic organic ant repellent around the perimeter of your rooms. Do NOT spray it directly on ants. Usually, Orange Guard is not needed once you have taken the other ant-deterring steps mentioned above.

Information courtesy of www.creativecrittersolutions.org