

Food sources

Red harvester ant foragers collect seeds and dead insects and store them in the nests as food for the colony. The ants' mouthparts are designed for chewing.

Management

Red harvester ants are native species and are generally not considered to be serious pests. Consider the option of not controlling these ants, especially in areas inhabited by the few remaining horned lizards (see box).

However, in certain cases, elimination of red harvester ants may be necessary. Destruction of their nests and habitat through regular discing and mowing may eliminate them without resorting to use of insecticides. If pesticides are selected, use registered products selectively and carefully follow instructions provided on the label.

Although any insecticide registered to control "ants" can be used to control harvester ants, few are registered specifically to control these species (Table 1). Harvester ants can be quickly eliminated using Amdro® Pro Fire Ant Bait (0.73 percent hydramethylnon) or similar products. Individual



Nest of red harvester ants

colonies can be treated using 2 to 5 tablespoons of product scattered around the colony's central opening. In larger areas, the product can be broadcast at a rate of 1 to 1 ½ pounds product per acre (2 to 3 ounces per 5,000 square feet) using a suitable application device such as a hand-cranked seeder or the electric-driven mountable Herd GT Model 77 Seeder. Amdro® can be used in lawns, landscaped areas, golf courses, other noncropped areas, grounds surrounding poultry houses, corrals, other animal

Help Save the Texas Horned Lizard

The **Texas horned lizard** is a protected threatened species. It is commonly called "horny toad."

Full-grown lizards are normally 2 ½ to 4 ¼ inches from the snout to the tip of the tail, although some grow larger. They have broad, flattened bodies and bear a crown of spines at the back of the head. Their color varies by the background color of the habitat in which they live.

Populations of the horned lizard and the harvester ant, on which it predominantly feeds, have declined in the eastern part of Texas. There are several possible factors contributing to the decline of these species.

- Red imported fire ants are believed to eliminate harvester ants and prevent new colonies from forming by preying on mated queen harvester ants.
- Red imported fire ants may prey directly on lizards or on hatching eggs of lizards.
- Many insecticides used to control or eliminate the red imported fire ant are toxic to

the harvester ant, and eliminate the harvester ant more efficiently than they eliminate fire ants. Broadcast applications of fire ant bait products should be avoided in areas where harvester ants are found.

- Horned lizards normally inhabit flat, open, dry country with little cover. Urbanization, mowing, shredding, shallow discing and other land use practices can eliminate or reduce the production of weed seeds on which harvester ants feed. Harvester ants and horned lizards, which are dependent upon this ant species, cannot survive in these disturbed habitats.

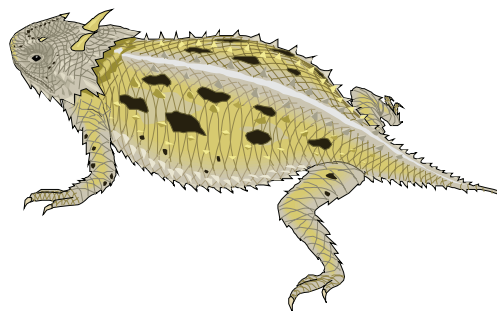


Table 1. Insecticide products available for treatment of harvester ants.

Common name and formulation	Product name*
abamectin B ₁ 0.011%	Advance 375A Select Granular Ant Bait Advance Granular Ant Bait Formula 1 Advance Granular Carpenter Ant Bait
acephate 50%	Ortho Orthene Fire Ant Killer
bifenthrin 0.115%	Ortho Bug B Gone Max Insect Killer for Lawns Basic Solutions by Ortho, Lawn & Garden Insect Killer
boric acid 7.5%	AntX 75
hydramethylnon 0.365% plus s-methoprene 0.250%	Extinguish Plus
hydramethylnon 0.73%	Amdro Pro Fire Ant Bait
hydramethylnon 1.0%	Maxforce Fire Ant Killer Granular Bait Maxforce Professional Insect Control Fine Granule Insect Bait Maxforce Professional Insect Control Granular Insect Bait

*Other products with different trade names may be available.

holding areas, nonbearing ornamental nursery stock, pasture and rangeland. Do not cut and bale hay from treated cattle pastures and rangeland until 7 days after bait application.

In noncrop areas, a contact insecticide such as products containing bifenthrin or acephate can be applied as directed to individual ant nests. When using Ortho Orthene® Fire Ant Killer (acephate 50 percent) apply as a dry application as directed. Other products may require water to wash the insecticide off of the dust or granular formulation and into the ant nest.

Additional Information

Drees, B.M. and J.A. Jackman. A Field Guide to Common Texas Insects. Gulf Publishers, 1998.

Garrett, J.M. and D.G. Barker. Texas Monthly Field Guide Series - A Field Guide to Reptiles and Amphibians of Texas. Gulf Publishing Co., 1987.

Web site: <http://ento.www.tamu.edu/extension/index.html>.

Suggested pesticides must be registered and labeled for use by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Texas Department of Agriculture. The status of pesticide label clearances is subject to change and may have changed since this publication was printed. County Extension agents and appropriate specialists are advised of changes as they occur.

The USER is always responsible for the effects of pesticide residues on his livestock and crops, as well as for problems that could arise from drift or movement of the pesticides from his property to that of others. Always read and follow carefully the instructions on the product label.

Acknowledgment

The author appreciates review comments from Dr. John Jackman, Dr. Dawn Gouge and Dr. Pat Morrison.