

## INFORMATION SHEET 03

### COMMON BLACK ANT/ GARDEN ANT

~ *Lasius niger*



#### DESCRIPTION

The ant is black or reddish brown in colour with a yellowish tint to the base of the antennae, jaws, feet and the base of the leg-joint. The ant's length varies from 3mm to 5mm.

The workers, forms the bulk of the nest population, vary in size dependent upon their tasks. The male and female both have wings but the male may be differentiated from the female, as the male has the smaller head, but longer antennae.

#### LIFE CYCLE

During July or August, swarming flights of newly emerged males and females are a common sight on warm sunny afternoons. Mating takes place in the air after which the males dies within a few days.

After mating, the female removes her wings and returns to the original colony or finds a suitable site, e.g. a tunnel under a stone, where she will remain until the following spring before she commences to lay eggs. Hatching takes place 22 – 28 days after the eggs have been laid during which period the young queen rests.

When the larvae hatch the queen feeds them with a salivary substance during the whole of this stage, which lasts 16 - 23 days.

After this period the young workers leave the nest and forage for dead insects, sweet materials such as nectar from flowers, and the excreta of aphid which they find sweet. The Black or Garden Ants is one species which tends and herds aphids, "milking" them of their excreta from time to time.

This food is fed by regurgitation in a liquid condition to further larvae produced by the queen.

#### REASONS FOR CONTROL

The ant has a foraging habit which brings with worker into the kitchen seeking sugar, syrup or other similar sweet foods causing annoyance to the owner. However, this species is not known to transmit disease. Their problem is, in the main, their persistence in finding their way into houses through very small cracks and gaps.

#### CONTROL METHODS

You can treat with a crawling insect spray or dust specifically sold for ant treatments obtained from garden centres. These can be applied as instructed in areas which ants must cross. Gels are also available which contain a poison which is taken back as food to the nest by the foraging ant.

#### TREATMENT

Treatment, using materials not available to the public as they contain a greater quantity of the active ingredient that effectively kills the ants. A competitive quotation can be obtained by calling our customers services ~ 020 8765 1301

Please note that all works are carried out by fully qualified Pest Technicians.