

Tackle fire ants in the fall for fewer ants in the spring.



Every year you resolve to win the war against fire ants. And every year, you experience the agony of defeat. But it's your home turf, so this year take control of the game.

Play in the fall.

Late August through early October is an ideal time to apply fire ant bait to your lawn — ants are still foraging and weather patterns are more predictable so you can apply bait when no rain is expected for several days after treatment. Baits are slow-acting, taking weeks to months to reduce ant mound numbers. It's a lot easier to be patient with baits while holed up inside during the winter than in the spring, when you're anxious to get outdoors — without getting stung.

Come together as a team and plan your attack.

Since fire ants travel from yard to yard, team up with your neighbors to implement fire ant control programs at the same time. Decide what control method to use and whether to hire a professional or to treat the neighborhood using the help of volunteers from your neighborhood organization.

Use the right gear in the right way so you and the environment don't get hurt.

Be careful and only use insecticides when and where they are needed. Closely follow label directions. Today's baits are gentle on the environment and are best applied using crank-type seeders or spreaders. The Two-Step Method (using baits and treating nuisance mounds individually) is best for most heavily infested turfgrass areas. In areas with low fire ant populations or an interest in preserving native ant species, treat mounds individually.

Constantly attack their line until you reach the goal for a resounding victory.

By starting your fire ant control program in the fall and following a regular maintenance schedule thereafter, you'll see fewer ants — and will spend less time on injured reserve because of ant stings.

Contact your county Extension agent for the full game plan or the Web at <http://fireant.tamu.edu>