



Community-Wide Imported Fire Ant Management Kit

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Fire ants are most often managed by individuals on their own property. Because of the very limited area usually treated, re-infestation from nearby untreated areas can occur quickly thus frustrating the individual homeowner. In some areas, homeowners in a subdivision or neighborhood have banded together to form a community-wide fire ant management program. By treating a larger area at one time with a selected product(s), re-infestation rates can be reduced dramatically. **For example, in the Jade Oaks neighborhood in San Antonio, this approach has reduced the number of imported fire ant mounds by 98 percent, ant problems by 98 percent, pesticide applications by 75 percent and costs by 80 percent.**

There may be significant cost-savings available to groups that are purchasing pesticide products for their programs based upon the volume purchased or from private pest control operators bidding on contracts for making applications to these larger areas.

Selection of product(s) for use in these programs is solely the decision of the community group designing and conducting the program. Technical support for product(s) selected can be obtained by contacting the manufacturer or distributor of the insecticide(s). For more information about available products and fire ant management approaches, contact the Texas Cooperative Extension or visit the web site, <http://fireant.tamu.edu>.

A community-wide fire ant management kit should include the following:

- **“Managing Imported Fire Ants in Urban Areas”** (B-6043), a publication containing discussions of fire ant management options and a chapter entitled, “Organizing a Community-Wide Fire Ant Suppression Program”. This publication is available at <http://tcebookstore.org>.
- **“The Texas Two-Step Method: Do-It-Yourself Fire Ant Control for Homes & Neighborhoods”** (L-5070), a leaflet which is also available from your local county Extension office for distribution to members of your community group. This publication is also available at <http://tcebookstore.org>.
- **“Selecting a Strategy and Contracting a Commercial Pest Control Service for Community-Wide Management Programs”** (FAPFS001) was designed to help neighborhood groups contract with a commercial pest control firm. The fact sheet entitled, “Commercial Pest Control Operator Involvement Community-Wide Fire Ant Management Programs” (FAPFS002), was written for private pest control operators to help them be better able to bid into community-wide fire ant management programs. Both of these fact sheets can be viewed on <http://fireant.tamu.edu> under “fact sheets/publications”.
- **“Survey-Based Management of Red Imported Fire Ants”** (FAPFS007) describes biologically-based monitoring and evaluation methods for documenting the need for, and evaluating the effects of conducting a fire ant management program. Techniques described will allow homeowners to assess the need for, and impact of, their fire ant control efforts. This fact sheet can be viewed on <http://fireant.tamu.edu> under “fact sheets/publications”.
- **“Broadcast Baits for Fire Ant Control”** (B-6099) is a publication providing in-depth information on one of the less-toxic, cost-effective approaches to imported fire ant suppression. Broadcast-applied bait products are central to the implementation of the Two-Step Method of Fire Ant Control.

This publication is available at <http://tcebookstore.org> with supporting technical information about available bait-formulated products available on <http://fireant.tamu.edu>.

- **“SAMPLE COVER LETTER”** and **“SAMPLE PRE-PROGRAM SURVEY”** (attached to this fact sheet) can be useful to a community group to send to their membership through their newsletter or billing program. These documents can be modified or used to assess the need(s) and impact(s) of the fire ant management program. This survey should allow any group to better document the continued acceptability of your program. The **“SAMPLE COVER LETTER FOR ASSESSING IMPACT”** form can be sent to members periodically following implementation of the program. These documents can be modified to include the name(s) and logo of the community group conducting a fire ant management program.
- **“TFARMP Covenant not to Sue and Agreement to Hold Harmless”**, fact sheet [FAPFS018](#) can be useful when volunteers are used to apply fire ant control materials to common areas, absentee landowner properties and for those unable to make applications themselves. If an accident should happen as a result of these activities, this legal document, signed in advance, can prevent legal difficulties.

For more information regarding fire ant management, see Extension publications [B-6043](#), *Managing Red Imported Fire Ants in Urban Areas*; [SP-196](#), *Management of Imported Fire Ants in Cattle Production Systems*; , [B-6099](#) *Broadcast Baits for Fire Ant Control*; or [L-5070](#) *The Texas Two-Step Method Do-It-Yourself Fire Ant Control for Homes and Neighborhoods*. Also visit our web site at <http://fireant.tamu.edu>.

The information given herein is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by Texas Cooperative Extension or the United States Department of Agriculture is implied.

Educational programs conducted by Texas Cooperative Extension serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability or national origin.

SAMPLE COVER LETTER TO COMMUNITY-GROUP MEMBERS:

Dear Neighbor,

As we all know, fire ants can be a serious pest in our community. Many of us try to control the pests in our own yards, only to have them move back in from neighboring areas. Individual property treatments can be successful, but they are often expensive, time consuming and frustrating. Though nothing will keep fire ants out forever, we can better control the ants for a longer period of time, at less cost, and at a lower risk to humans and the environment by working together to manage fire ants properly across the entire community.

In a survey of the major cities in Texas, households reported spending an average of over \$150 per year on fire ant treatments, repairing damages such as electrical shorts and medical costs to stinging victims. Communities participating in management programs usually spend less than \$10 per household per year with excellent fire ant control and little, if any, damage. Cities such as Fort Worth, Tyler and Austin actively promote these programs to reduce ground water and runoff water pollution from fire ant insecticides.

Several of your neighbors have volunteered their time to help organize such an effort, but we must first find out what you think the severity of the problem is, its cost to you and your willingness to participate in an organized fire ant management plan.

Please answer the questions on the attached survey as honestly as possible and return it to us promptly. If you need more information, would like to participate or volunteer your help, give us your name, address and phone number. If you do not wish to participate, for whatever reason, you don't need to give us your name or address, but please return the survey so we will have your opinion.

If there is enough community interest in conducting a fire ant management plan, you will be notified of an organizational meeting and be given further details.

Thank you,

SAMPLE PRE-PROGRAM SURVEY TO ASSESS FIRE ANT CONTROL NEEDS:



Texas Fire Ant Plan

**COMMUNITY-WIDE FIRE ANT MANAGEMENT
Interest Survey**

Please indicate how big a problem fire ants are in the following areas of this neighborhood:

	<u>no problem</u>	<u>slight</u>	<u>moderate</u>	<u>severe</u>
Around your home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In playgrounds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In parks, green belts or common areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sports fields, golf courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

About how often do you treat for fire ants, or have them treated professionally?

- never or rarely yearly 2-6 times per year monthly weekly more often
 Please check here if you use a professional for fire ant control

About how much do you spend, or how much extra does it cost, to control fire ants in a year?

- zero \$1-10 \$11-25 \$25-100 \$100-200 over \$200

If you treat for fire ants yourself, what method do you use?

- mound treatments with granules, drenches, baits, or dusts
 broadcast bait treatments (Amdro, Logic, Eliminator, etc.)
 a combination of mound treatments and baits at different times
 the Two-Step Program

Mark any statements that describe your feelings about fire ants and their treatment.

- | <u>Ants themselves</u> | <u>Fire ant treatments</u> |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mostly a nuisance | <input type="checkbox"/> They don't work well |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dangerous to anyone | <input type="checkbox"/> They're too expensive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dangerous to children especially | <input type="checkbox"/> They may cause pollution |
| <input type="checkbox"/> They move in if neighbors don't treat | <input type="checkbox"/> I don't use treatments |

Would you be willing to participate in a program that treated the entire neighborhood for fire ants if it cost you less than what you are doing now and eliminated most of your fire ant problems?

- YES NO Need more information

Please return the form to the following address as soon as possible:

If you know you would like to participate or need more information, please give us your name, address, phone number and any comments you may have.

Name:

Address:

Phone number:

- Yes, I would like to participate in a fire ant management program.
- I would volunteer to help organize such an effort.
- Please send me more information.

Comments on fire ants, their control, or a management program in this neighborhood:



For much more information on fire ants and their management you can visit the web site of the Texas Fire Ant Research and Management Plan at <http://fireant.tamu.edu> or visit your local County Extension Office.

SAMPLE COVER LETTER FOR ASSESSING IMPACT OF FIRE ANT CONTROL METHODS:

Texas Fire Ant Plan

COMMUNITY-WIDE FIRE ANT MANAGEMENT Satisfaction Survey

Did you participate in the community-wide fire ant management effort?

- YES NO New to the neighborhood

Whether you participated or not, indicate how big a problem fire ants are now in the following areas of this neighborhood since the fire ant management program began:

	<u>no problem</u>	<u>slight</u>	<u>moderate</u>	<u>severe</u>
Around your home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In playground	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In parks, green belts or common areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sports fields, golf courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What are your opinions of this neighborhood's fire ant management plan?

- Worth the time and effort Yes No Unsure
Saved me money Yes No Unsure
Reduced fire ant problems Yes No Unsure
Better for the environment Yes No Unsure
Helped me better understand fire ants Yes No Unsure

Other than program treatments, how often do you now make additional treatments?

- never or rarely 2-6 more times per year monthly weekly

About how much extra do you spend on those extra treatments in a year?

- zero \$1-10 \$11-25 \$25-100 \$100-200 over \$200

What are your feelings on continuing the plan?

- I would like to continue to participate.
 I would like to participate at the first opportunity.

- I do not wish to participate.
- Need more information.

Please return the form to the following address as soon as possible:

If you know you would like to participate or need more information, please give us your name, address, phone number and any comments you may have.

Name:

Address:

Phone number:

- Yes, I would like to participate in a fire ant management program.
- I would volunteer to help organize such an effort.
- Please send me more information.

Comments on fire ants, their control, or a management program in this neighborhood:

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