

Community-Wide Imported Fire Ant Management Kit

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Most often, individuals are responsible for managing fire ants on their property. Because of the limited area usually treated, re-infestation from nearby untreated areas can occur quickly. In some areas, homeowners in a subdivision or neighborhood have banded together to form a [community-wide fire ant management program](#). Treating a larger area at one time with selected products can dramatically reduce re-infestation rates. 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.

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

The selection of product(s) for these programs is solely the decision of the community group designing and conducting the program. Techni-

cal support is available from the manufacturer or distributor of the insecticide(s). For more information about available products and fire ant management approaches, contact the [Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service](#), or visit the [Texas Imported Fire Ant Research and Management Project](#) website, or [eXtension](#).

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

- ◆ [Managing Imported Fire Ants in Urban Areas](#), a publication that discusses fire ant management options and a chapter entitled, “Organizing a Community-Wide Fire Ant Suppression Program.”
- ◆ [Fire Ant Control: The Two-Step Method and Other Approaches](#), a leaflet that is also available from your local county Extension office for distribution to members of your community group.
- ◆ [Considerations for the Development of Community-Wide Red Imported Fire Ant Management Programs](#) was designed to help neighborhood groups contract with a commercial pest control firm and to help private pest control operators be better able to bid into community-wide fire ant management programs.
- ◆ [Survey-Based Management of Red Imported Fire Ants](#) describes biologically-based moni-



toring and evaluation methods for documenting the need for, and evaluating the effects of conducting a fire ant management program. The techniques described help homeowners assess the need for and the impact of their fire ant control efforts.

- *Broadcast Baits for Fire Ant Control* provides 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.

A community group can send the *Sample Cover Letter* and *Sample Pre-Program Survey* included here to their membership through their newsletter or billing program. These documents can help assess the need for and impact of the

fire ant management program and allow the group to better document the continued acceptability of the program. Periodically send the *Sample Post-Program Survey* form to members following implementation of the program. You can modify these documents to include the name and logo of the community group conducting a fire ant management program.

The attached *Texas Imported Fire Ant Research and Management Project Covenant Not to Sue and Agreement to Hold Harmless* sheets can be useful when volunteers 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 help prevent legal difficulties.

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 paying medical costs of fire ant stings. 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 groundwater 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 or would like to participate or volunteer your help, give us your name, address, and phone number. If you do not wish to participate, 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 given further details.

Thank you,

Sample Pre-Program Survey to Assess Fire Ant Control Needs: 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"/>

How often do you treat for fire ants or have them treated professionally?

never or rarely yearly 2 to 6 times per year monthly weekly more often

Please check here if you use a professional for fire ant control.

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

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

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

- Ant mound treatments with granules, drenches, baits, or dusts
- Broadcast bait treatments (Amdro, Extinguish Plus, etc.)
- A combination of mound treatments and baits at different times
- The Two-Step Method

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

Ants themselves

- Mostly a nuisance
- Dangerous to anyone
- Dangerous to children especially
- They move in if neighbors don't treat.

Fire ant treatments

- They don't work well.
- They're too expensive.
- They may cause pollution.
- 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.

Sample Post-Program Survey Assessing the Impact of Fire Ant Control Methods:

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 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"/>

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 to 6 times per year monthly weekly

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

- zero \$1 to \$10 \$11 to \$25 \$25 to \$100 \$100 to \$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:

For much more information on fire ants and their management, visit the website of the Texas Imported Fire Ant Research and Management Project at <http://fireant.tamu.edu> or visit your local county Extension office.

Texas Imported Fire Ant Research and Management Project Covenant Not to Sue and Agreement to Hold Harmless

In consideration for receiving assistance from the Texas Imported Fire Ant Research and Management Project of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, a component member of The Texas A&M University System, I _____ (landowner/homeowner's association/lessee) hereby RELEASE, WAIVE, DISCHARGE, AND COVENANT NOT TO SUE, AND AGREE TO HOLD HARMLESS for any and all purposes Texas A&M University, The Texas A&M University System, the Board of Regents for The Texas A&M University System, the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, and their officers, servants, agents, volunteers, or employees (herein referred to as "RELEASEES") from any and all liabilities, claims, demands, or injury, including death, that may be sustained by me, my family, agents, representatives, or employees or to any personal or real property belonging to me WHETHER CAUSED BY THE NEGLIGENCE OF THE RELEASEES or otherwise while participating in the Texas Imported Fire Ant Research and Management Project and activities associated with the project, or while in, or upon the premises where the activity associated with the project is being conducted. This shall include common areas of commonly held or owned properties, privately owned homes and properties, and leased properties.

Releasors/Participants are fully aware that there are inherent risks involved when one or more persons, including the Releasees, enter onto their property without prior knowledge of any inherent risks or dangers found thereon. Releasors/Participants hereby elect to voluntarily participate in the Texas Imported Fire Ant Research and Management Project and to allow all Releasees to enter onto the Releasors/Participants property(s) and engage in such activity knowing that the activity may be hazardous to the Releasors/Participants as well as the Releasees and that real and personal property damages may be sustained.

Releasors/Participants VOLUNTARILY ASSUME FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY RISKS OF LOSS, PROPERTY DAMAGE, OR PERSONAL INJURY, INCLUDING DEATH, that may be sustained during the presence of Releasees on the Releasors/Participants property or while involved with the research and management project, WHETHER CAUSED BY THE NEGLIGENCE OF RELEASEES OR OTHERWISE. Releasors/Participants further hereby AGREE TO INDEMNIFY AND HOLD HARMLESS THE RELEASEES from any loss, liability, damage, or costs, including court costs and attorney's fees that may occur.

IN SIGNING THIS COVENANT NOT TO SUE AND AGREEMENT TO HOLD HARMLESS, RELEASORS/PARTICIPANTS ACKNOWLEDGE AND REPRESENT THAT they have read the foregoing Covenant Not to Sue and Agreement to Hold Harmless, understand it, and sign it voluntarily as their own free act and deed; no oral representations, statements, or inducements apart from the foregoing agreement that has been reduced to writing have been made. Releasors/Participants execute this document for full, adequate, and complete consideration fully intending to be bound by the same now and in the future.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I/We have hereunto set my/our hand this _____ day of _____, (yyyy).

RELEASOR/PARTICIPANT

REFERENCES

Community-Wide Red Imported Fire Ant Management Programs in Texas

sswe.tamu.edu/PDF/SWE_S25_P031-41.pdf

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

agrilife.org/agrilife-agencies/extension-home/

Texas Imported Fire Ant Research and Management Project

fireant.tamu.edu

eXtension

www.eXtension.org/fire+ants

Managing Imported Fire Ants in Urban Areas

www.extension.org/pages/11004/managing-imported-fire-ants-in-urban-areas-printable-version

Fire Ant Control: The Two-Step Method and Other Approaches

www.agrilifebookstore.org/product-p/ento-034.htm

Considerations for Developing a Community-Wide Red Imported Fire Ant Management Program

u.tamu.edu/ento-026

Survey-Based Management of Red Imported Fire Ants

u.tamu.edu/ento-007

Broadcast Baits for Fire Ant Control

www.agrilifebookstore.org/product-p/e-628.htm

For more information regarding fire ant management, see Extension publications *Managing Red Imported Fire Ants in Urban Areas*, *Broadcast Baits for Fire Ant Control*, or *Fire Ant Control: The Two-Step Method and Other Approaches* posted on <http://AgriLifeBookstore.org>.

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Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

AgriLifeExtension.tamu.edu

More Extension publications can be found at *AgriLifeBookstore.org*

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