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☀ ANT PRESSURE  
IS TRENDING UP

☀ TOP 5 ANTS  
PMPs FACE

☀ COLONY  
IDIOSYNCRASIES  
TO WATCH

☀ EXCLUSIVE  
RESEARCH

# ant 2024 STATE OF THE control MARKET REPORT

# Greetings from Syngenta

**A**nts are consistently one of the top pests customers struggle with around their homes and properties. This is reflected in the number of ant accounts pest management professionals (PMPs) handle every year. In fact, according to PCT magazine's 2024 State of the Ant Control Market report findings, 47% of surveyed PMPs saw an increase in ant infestations in their market area, and 53% expect to see increased revenue from ant control services in 2024.

In the face of this demand, PMPs have risen to the challenge of meeting the ant control needs of their customers. In support of your efforts, we're proud to partner with PCT magazine to sponsor this year's State of the Ant Control Market report. Through this survey, PMPs offered insights into their ant control challenges and successes, as well as thoughts on the future of the industry. We hope you find this report valuable and can use this information to help elevate your ant control offerings.

It's important for PMPs to have a well-stocked toolbox to keep ants under control. **Advion® MicroFlow insect bait**, the latest ant control solution from Syngenta, helps PMPs reach deep into hard-to-reach cracks and crevices where ants nest or forage. This dry flowable bait has a finely milled formulation that sticks to ants' cuticles, who carry it back to the nest for more complete control. Advion MicroFlow also perfectly complements other ant control products in the Syngenta portfolio.

**Advion Ant and Optigard® Ant gel baits** are industry leaders for superior ant control — and with good reason. They're formulated for excellent palatability and are rigorously tested to provide effective, targeted control you and your customers can rely on. Additionally, Syngenta recently made a multimillion-dollar investment in its gel bait production facility to help overcome industry-wide supply chain challenges.

PMPs can further stock their ant control toolboxes with:

- **Advion WDG, Demand® CS, Optigard Flex and Tandem® insecticides:** These residual spray formulations offer preventive control for super-colony ant species
- **Advion Insect granular bait:** This highly palatable granular bait formulation is ideal for extended perimeter pest control beyond where a sprayable product can be applied

As you tackle tough ant infestations, we'll continue to provide you with tools for success — so you can provide your customers with a life uninterrupted by ants.

*Dr. Tim Husen*

Dr. Tim Husen  
Technical Services Manager  
Syngenta Professional Pest Management



Dr. Tim Husen

For more information, visit [SyngentaPMP.com](https://www.SyngentaPMP.com).

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Ant pressure might be on the rise this year, but predicting their prevalence has been tricky in the past.

**T**hey're social, organized and innately smart. "Ants are just brilliant," said Lance Griggs, assigning valedictorian characteristics to Formicidae family members. They even form a mini caste system with a division of labor and jobs. The owner of Spectrum Pest Management in Madison, Ala., said hands-down, "ants are definitely the No. 1 reason why customers call us."

He added, "They are just great little exploiters and find any opening or any crack."

According to the pest management professionals (PMPs) across the country surveyed in PCT's annual State of the Ant Control Market survey, sponsored by Syngenta, 47 percent of respondents noted an increase in ant infestations, with 45 percent indicating ant pressure is the same as last year.

Invasive ants are a growing problem for 52 percent, and overall, 53 percent of PMPs who participated in the survey expect an increase in revenue generated from ant control services.

"People tend to think that German cockroaches drive the pest control business, but, in reality, there are over 240 species of ants in Florida and a similar number in other states," said Tom Jarzynka, vice president of technical and training, Massey Services, Orlando, Fla.

He echoed Griggs' take. "Ants are the No. 1 reason people call us to ask for help," Jarzynka said.

Ant pressure is on the rise, though Mark Peterson said tracking it in his Kansas City, Mo., business Absolute Pest Control is "like a roller coaster or the Dow Jones ticker." One year, his family business performed 60 ant control services as a brand-new startup. "The next year, it was down by more than half," he said. "It can fluctuate that much."

This year, he is expecting an uptick and is heading into the season prepared with products in store. "We had an unseasonably warm winter, and that will unleash all kinds of critters," he said, planning to get ahead of ants this year.

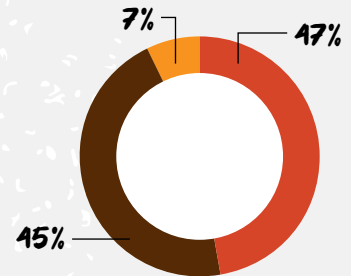
"Everyone in Eugene has ants," said Jason Dimick, owner, PAH Weed and Pest in Eugene, Ore. "It's just a matter of where they show up and when they show up."

This sentiment is consistent across the industry, and this year's State of the Ant Control Market Report explores pressure, control and service. 🐜

### Trail Trends

Over the past year, do you feel the incidence of ant infestations has increased, decreased or remained the same in your location's market area?

● Increased ● Remained the same ● Decreased

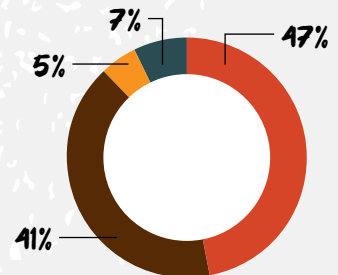


Source: Readex Research; Number of Respondents: 266

### More Business

In the past five years, have ant control services become a more or less significant portion of your location's business?

● more significant ● no change ● less significant  
● cannot compare; not involved five years ago

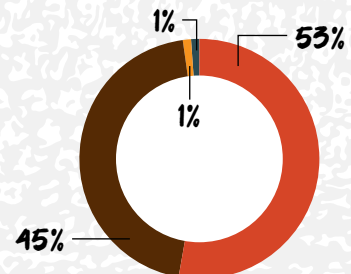


Source: Readex Research; Number of Respondents: 266

### Revenue Matters

Compared with 2023, do you anticipate the percentage of your location's revenue generated from its ant control services to increase, decrease or remain the same in 2024?

● increase ● same ● decrease ● no answer



Source: Readex Research; Number of Respondents: 266

**About The Survey:** The 2024 PCT State of the Ant Control Market survey was sponsored by Syngenta and compiled by Readex Research, a privately held research firm in Stillwater, Minn. A sample of 4,381 pest control company owners, executives and technical directors was systematically selected from the PCT database. Data was collected from 276 respondents — a 6 percent response rate — via online survey from Jan. 4-16, 2024. Ten respondents indicated their companies did not provide ant control services and were terminated from the survey. The margin of error for percentages based on the remaining 266 respondents is plus or minus 5.8 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level. Charts may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.





# What's Your Type?

Location, season, environmental whims and hyper-local conditions dictate ant presence and pressure.

Operating in nine states with varying ant pressure and species in each geography, Massey Services sees tawny crazy ants in the West, along with some white-footed and big-headed ants. Outdoors, fire ants are commonplace in warmer regions. Odorous house ants and Argentine ants are the most popular houseguests across the board, said Tom Jarzynka, vice president of technical and training, Massey Services, Orlando, Fla.

The top five ant invaders based on PCT's 2024 State of the Ant Control Market are odorous house, carpenter, little black, Argentine and fire ants. Twenty-eight percent of respondents cited odorous house ants as the most common type. Otherwise, species prevalence is highly regional.

**ROLE CALL.** Jason Dimick won't go long before the phone rings for pavement ants in the Eugene, Ore., market. "With the sandy soil here, they move quickly and come up through any crack in a foundation or slab they can find," said the owner of PAH Weed and Pest.

Carpenter ants frequently settle into damp timber, which is all over the place and not just on and in homes. "Sugar ants are huge here," Dimick said. "Once they are embedded, it takes some pretty aggressive control to get to the bottom of it." He offered a colleague's experience: "He wanted to see how

far down the nest was, and he dug down about 25 feet before finding it."

Jay Strassner of Allswell Here in San Diego, Calif., finds nocturnal rover ants, which he calls "the trickiest ants," because of their night moves, along with thief ants and harvester ants in rural areas. Because his routes shift from downtown to agricultural areas, "our treatments change depending on the property," he said.

Outdoors, fire ants are a struggle in the South and West. Howard Hatzfeld's Spring Branch, Texas-based business, Hill Country Pest Solutions, sees its fair share. "Most of the time, I wait until after a rain and they start pushing up their little mounds of dirt," he said of early identification.

Velvety tree ants in Idyllwild, Calif., are often confused with carpenter ants, said Jeff Litten, owner, Acorn Pest Control in Hemet, Calif.

But the velvet ants really bite.

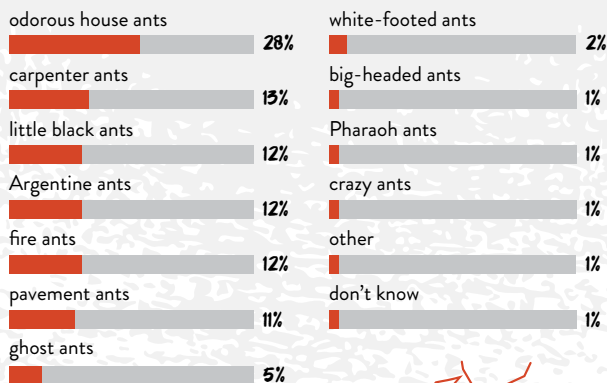
"I've seen people and animals all bit up," Litten said, noting that their "leave-behind" is a talcum powder-like fine dust versus the carpenter ants' sawdust. After eggs are laid in April and May, velvety tree ants, which like roosting on the top beams of the region's A-frame homes, begin trailing to move back outside to trees. "They are all over the windows," he said, citing non-repellent insecticides as his go-to control method.

Come early spring with its consistently warm temperatures, Lance Griggs, Spectrum Pest Management, said Argentine and odorous house ants — the most common structural pests in his Madison, Ala., region — will double and triple trail their way along brush-covered perimeters, entering through cracks and eaves, and from underneath slab foundations.

Griggs recalled a particularly messy bathroom infestation with "thousands of ants" that were entering from the plumbing supply line at the base of a pedestal sink. With a lot of slab buildings in his neck of the woods, pavement ants also move

## Specific Species

What ant species represented the largest percentage of your location's service calls in 2023?



Source: Readex Research; Number of Respondents: 266



## Invasive Issues

Are invasive ants a growing problem in your location's market area?

52%  
yes

48%  
no

Source: Readex Research;  
 Number of Respondents: 266



through soil and journey into homes, he said.

**SUPER DUTY.** Nearly half of PMPs surveyed observed elevated ant pressure, and 52 percent said invasive ants are a growing problem. “We are seeing an expansion of invasive species, and with the world as small as it is these days, we will continue to see that,” Jarzynka said, calling species like the tawny crazy ant “the bed bugs of 10 years ago.”

“As time passes, we figure out how to control [super colonies], we learn their behavior, biology and adopt strategies to manage them,” he said.

Jarzynka described a big-headed ant colony invading a 6-acre area where a homeowner’s property bordered a powerline easement. The client’s backyard was overdue for “doggy duty,” which attracted the super-colony insects to her home.

Placing residual barriers away from buildings to restrict foraging and the use of insect growth regulators (IGRs) with bait has shown real promise, Jarzynka said, relating that “there is no one-size fits all approach.”

Howard Hatzfeld said he only dealt with thief ants and Pharaoh ants once in his Spring Branch, Texas, region, where he operates Hill Country Pest Solutions. He had a couple of interactions with tawny crazy ants while working with a different company. “I had never seen anything like it before,” he said of the ants crowding driveway cracks, hugging the house perimeter and treating crevices like a six-lane highway.

After treatment, he advised the client to use a leaf blower to blow off the corpses so the emerging ants would be exposed to the product. “Otherwise, they travel over the dead soldiers, and you end up with a retreat,” Hatzfeld said.

Was the super-colony strategy successful? “I never heard back from him,” Hatzfeld said, considering that an affirmative. ✨

# Bait & Switch

Good ant management uses a number of control methods that are ever evolving.

“I don’t believe in a silver bullet,” said Tom Jarzynka, Massey Services’ vice president of technical and training.

“Having access to a variety of baits ... allows us to match the right tools for the situations and season,” he said.

Switching baits to prevent aversion and appeal to ants during various seasons and stages is an essential element of gaining control, Jarzynka said. “One bait can work really well in the spring, and in the fall, ants will avoid it and become attracted to something else,” he said.

For instance, in winter, ants need carbohydrates for energy to maintain the colony during cooler temperatures. “So, carbs should be a larger part of the food matrix then,” he said.

Protein is essential during egg-laying and baits that are formulated accordingly can be more tempting to ants during this lifecycle stage.

Feeding patterns evolve, as should control methods. “Summers in Texas, even the ants are smart enough to stay indoors, so you don’t see them foraging in the heat of the day and there is not a lot of available nectars in flowering plants, so utilize a bait that will be attractive at that point,” he said.

Rotating three go-to baits, all liquids and gels, is a winning combination for Joe Pfaff, president of Joey’s Elite Pest Control in Harvest, Ala.

“Ants will go to a bait immediately, and if they don’t like it, they will go to the other one — because they do get picky,” he said.

State of the Ant Control Market survey respondents all deploy a multi-modal strategy to oust ants, but pesticide applications, including baits, are the primary method for 92 percent of them.

Howard Hatzfeld usually sticks with crack-and-crevice treatments for outdoor perimeter control and targeted anti-repellents indoors when dealing with ants. He finds success. “If I use a gel bait, it’s under a sink,” said the owner of Hill Country Pest Solutions in Spring Branch, Texas.

What’s on the forefront of bait formulation and ant control products overall?

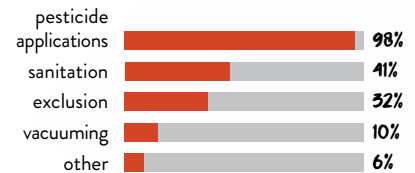
“The actives that manufacturers bring us work,” Jarzynka said. “An effective program promotes a bait-and-switch (and perhaps switch again) pattern.”

Bait delivery methods, granular options and bait matrices would be a welcome introduction to the pest control market, said Lance Griggs, owner of Spectrum Pest Management in Madison, Ala.

“We have great tools, and I always like to try new things to see what works,” he said. ✨

## In Control

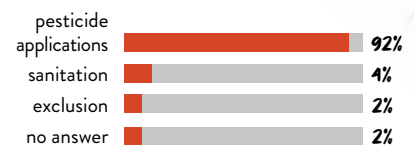
What types of control measures does your location use to manage ants in homes and/or businesses?



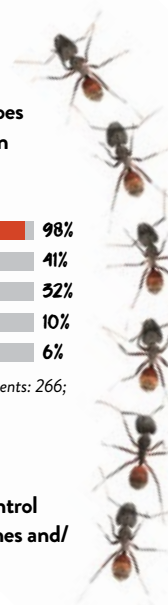
Source: Readex Research; Number of Respondents: 266; Respondents could select multiple answers

## Primary Position

What is your location’s primary control measure for managing ants in homes and/or businesses?



Source: Readex Research; Number of Respondents: 266





# Clean Up!

Good sanitation practices can help keep ants at bay. Here's some advice on how to communicate that to customers.

**L**itter, dirty dishes, crumb-cluttered corners and plumbing leaks are common indoor clean-up issues that attract ants. Outside, it's leaf debris, mulch, pine needles and brush too close to the home and foundation, along with damp firewood and backyards that haven't seen Fido's poop scoop in a while.

Do you call out the client? Is there a low-key way to say, "Get your act together!" Could clean-up be a billable service opportunity? Here's what some industry professionals have to say on the matter.

**WASTE OF BAND-AIDS.** "Until this base sanitation issue is fixed, I'm just a Band-Aid." This is what Jason Dimick, owner, PAH Weed and Pest, Eugene, Ore., tells customers who aren't doing their part. He wants them to know: "You are wasting your resources." Do clients appreciate this message?

"I find that open and frank discussions, even though they can get uncomfortable, play a huge part in managing expectations," said Dimick. Yes, some people just won't do it. But he says it can help to gently remind, "We talked about this — and this is why the issue isn't getting better."

**PUT AWAY THE PARTY.** In Edisto, S.C., beach rentals and waterfront homes are entertainment destinations. Sanitation issues are rare, said Brad Drawdy, owner of Apex of Edisto Pest Management.

But there's the byproduct of grilling and chilling, which creates waste that ants like.

"Ants find the trash cans, uncleaned grills, dumped pots of shrimp and fish boils on the ground," he said.

Also, he advises homeowners and landlords to keep limbs trimmed and away from roofs, soffits and siding. "We started offering this service at an extra cost," he said. "We just cut back the limbs with a pole saw. It works great because we mainly deal with palmetto and palm trees and live oaks."

**PRUNE OR POLITELY PAY.** Joe Pfaff coaches customers to pay close attention to limbs, brush, pine needles and leaf debris crowding structures. If they want a "keep out" policy for ants, then some light-duty landscaping is a must.

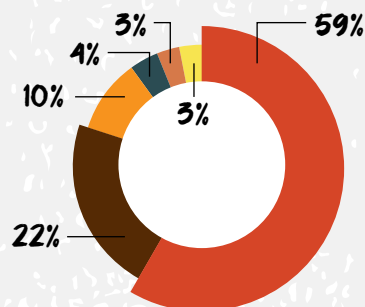
No cheating with the cleanup.

"If you trim hedges and never remove the debris that falls down into the base of boxwoods or hollies, you can just pull ant colonies out of there like crazy," said the president of Joey's Elite Pest

## Spot Check

What is the primary ant "hot spot" in homes/residential properties in your location's market area?

- kitchen
- perimeter foundation walls
- along structural guidelines
- trees and shrubs
- around windows
- other



Source: Readex Research; Number of Respondents: 266

Control in Harvest, Ala.

Pfaff starts with a conversation and a quick overview of culprits that can be eliminated. If the next visit reveals the same old landscape issues, he'll introduce an option.

"It usually ends up with, 'If you don't want to do it, I will.'"

Not for free. But most clients are just fine with that. "If they have a pest control service and lawn care, they don't want to go out there and do the leaves," Pfaff said. ✨



# IN-FIELD **Feedback**

Here's what some PMPs are saying about ant service frequency, pricing and more.

**A**re ant control services wrapped into a general pest control fee structure, stand-alone or does cost depend on classification? (Carpenter ants are often an add-on.) What service frequency is necessary to maintain control?

PMPs share their thoughts on these and more.

**SERVICE SEPARATION.** Depending on the ants involved, some PMPs treat ants as an add-on or separate service from general pest control. “Odorous house ants require a lot of attention, so I know it’s not a one-and-done service,” said Mark Peterson, Absolute Pest Control, Vassar, Kan. “I know it will require attention, so we sell ant control as a separate service because of extra visits.”

Jason Dimick, owner, PAH Weed and Pest, Eugene, Ore., treats carpenter ants as an add-on service. “It takes a lot more time and investigation to figure out their trails,” he said. “Because they are so time intensive, I am selective in when I choose to do those services.”

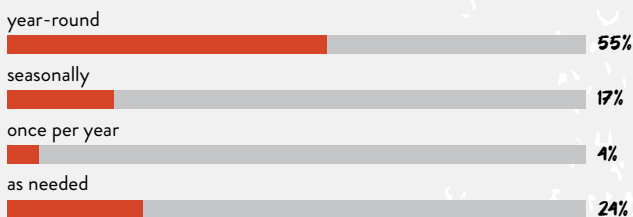
**SERVICE FREQUENCY.** “While many companies offer quarterly service, we do bimonthly and it includes ants — along with carpenter and fire ants,” said Howard Hatzfeld, Hill Country Pest Solutions in Spring Branch, Texas. “If I am going to charge additionally, it would only be on the initial service and after that, ant control is part of general pest control.”

Joe Pfaff, president, Joey’s Elite Pest Control in Harvest, Ala., bases frequency on product efficacy. “We perform monthly and bimonthly services because the product efficacy usually doesn’t exceed 60 days and that way, we are not getting callbacks,” he said.

**SERVICE COSTS.** Jeff Litten, Acorn Pest Control, Hemet, Calif., treats all ants as part of general pest control. “I see a lot of companies charge more for wood-destroying insects, but I do both carpenter and velvety tree ants under general pest,” he said. ✨

## Frequent Fliers

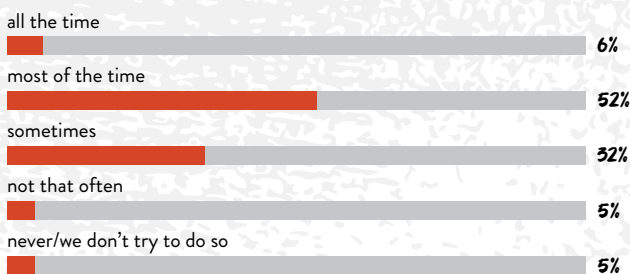
How often does your location provide its ant control services to its typical client?



Source: Readex Research; Number of Respondents: 266

## Up Sell

How often are your location’s technicians able to convert a new ant service call to a recurring service customer?



Source: Readex Research; Number of Respondents: 266



# TRUST THE #1 TOOLS IN THE TRADE

Like a carpenter's trusty hammer, Syngenta gel baits are what pest management professionals reach for to get the job done right. Formulated with highly attractive bait matrices, **Advion®** and **Optigard®** brand gel baits are the industry's leaders for superior control of ants and cockroaches.



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