



# SILENCING THE **STING**

ABOUT 20 MILLION people — 40% of those in infested areas — feel the nasty sting of fire ants every year. Arriving in the United States in the 1930s, fire ants reportedly occupy more than 300 million acres, or a landmass nearly twice the size of Texas, and cause \$6 billion in damage annually nationwide.

It's time to silence the sting of fire ants. That's why we've partnered with major chemical manufacturers this month — to provide a snapshot of leading-edge pesticide tools and offer application tips to help lawn care operators (LCOs) extinguish these pests.

## » A targeted approach

Lee Bloomcamp, a Syngenta Professional Products' territory manager in Florida, says an added "plus" for Award fire ant bait with the active ingredient (AI) fenoxycarb is that it's designed to not kill non-target pests.

"If native ant populations are disrupted, the rapidly reproducing fire ants can quickly gain the upper hand by their

## Chemical manufacturers discuss pesticide tools and offer application tips to extinguish fire ants

BY MARTY WHITFORD EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

sheer numbers and fierceness — and that's the last thing LCOs and their customers want," Bloomcamp adds.

Long-term fire ant control typically takes about two to three months for total mound collapse, says Bloomcamp, noting LCOs can use Syngenta's Scimitar CS contact insecticide directly on mounds for immediate individual treatments.

"We guarantee at least 90% control of fire ants after two Award applications, typically done in the spring and fall. In extreme cases in South Texas and Florida, we recommend three Award applications," she says.

When broadcasting fire ant bait, LCOs should use different spreaders than they use for fertilizers. Otherwise, the fire ant bait's AI carrier might

absorb salts from the fertilizer and decrease acceptance of the bait. For a limited time, LCOs can earn a complimentary new Herd spreader when purchasing 300 lbs. of Award. [www.syngentaprofessionalproducts.com](http://www.syngentaprofessionalproducts.com)

## » Technology advancements

Dr. Kathie Kalmowitz, technical specialist, BASF Turf & Ornamentals, says baits are still the most cost-effective solution to deliver the most-consistent control. Better still, she adds, is when LCOs deliver topical applications of a liquid insecticide with the AI bifenthrin to visible mounds, followed by a broadcast lawn application with a fire ant bait containing an insect growth regulator (IGR).

BASF's Amdro Pro eliminates the

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Fire ant tunnels can extend 100 feet from mounds, but broadcast bait helps provide blanket control for susceptible areas such as sports fields.



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fire ant queen and her colony within seven days of a mound treatment, and rids the entire area of fire ants within two weeks of a broadcast application, Kalmowitz says. Its AI, hydramethalon, is an electron transport inhibitor that eliminates the pests' energy sources.

[www.betterturf.com](http://www.betterturf.com)

### » Drench the drama

LCOs can apply diluted (0.1 fluid oz./gal.) of Dow AgroScience's Conserve SC (AI: spinosad) to individual fire ant mounds as a drench application. For mounds 8 in. in diameter or smaller, LCOs should use 1 gal. of dilution; larger mounds should be treated with 2 gals. of the solution.

Mark Urbanowski, Dow AgroScience's senior marketing specialist for turf, ornamental and technical products, warns LCOs to not disturb fire ant mounds prior to applications. Pressurized sprays should not be used, as they might disturb the ants and cause migration, reducing control. For best results, the sprayable suspension concentrate, which works on contact as well as through ingestion by the pests, should be applied in cool weather (65°F to 85°F).

[www.dowagro.com/turf/prod/conserve.htm](http://www.dowagro.com/turf/prod/conserve.htm)

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### » A 1-2 combo

Rick Ekins, product manager for FMC Professional Solutions, says FMC's Talstar products are widely used for fire ant control in either a single or two-step process.

Many LCOs use Talstar Professional to directly treat mounds and Talstar

EZ Granular Insecticide as a broadcast application across turfgrass areas to provide long-term residual fire ant control in commercial and residential settings. Some LCOs use one or the other, depending on the situation, but many use the 1-2 Talstar combo. Both products feature bifenthrin as their AI. [www.fmcprosolutions.com](http://www.fmcprosolutions.com)



### » Fast and longlasting

Advion fire ant bait, featuring the IA indoxacarb, offers LCOs the benefits of both baits and contact insecticides, says Nancy Schwartz, DuPont Professional Products' marketing manager for turf and ornamentals. DuPont's Advion provides total colony control in 24 to 72 hours. It takes just one or two applications to achieve year-long control — at an annual cost per acre that's more affordable than many other products.

"An increasing number of LCOs are looking for environmentally smart products that don't compromise on performance," Schwartz says. "There is a growing interest in products such as Advion that have earned a 'reduced risk' designation from the EPA."

Schwartz's technique tips include applying the bait when the soil surface temperature is above 60°F and air temperatures are between 75°F and 90°F, and not applying if the grass is wet with dew, rainfall or irrigation, or during excessively hot periods of the day.

[www2.dupont.com/Professional\\_Products/en\\_US](http://www2.dupont.com/Professional_Products/en_US)

### » Control choices

Bayer Environmental Science's TopChoice granular insecticide provides control of fire ants for up to a year, as well as control of mole crickets for four months, with a single broadcast application. While an application in the late winter to early spring is recommended, TopChoice can be applied any time throughout the year.

Bayer's Maxforce FC Fire Ant Bait also provides effective control of fire ants with its Simply Irresistible formula and the exclusive Maxforce Domino Effect.

In addition, TopChoice + Fertilizer offers the power of fire ant control with valuable nutrients needed for healthy turf. In the first week after rainfall or watering in, TopChoice + Fertilizer reduces active mounds twice as fast as TopChoice alone, says Jason Kuhlmeier, business manager — insecticides, lawn and landscape market lead, Bayer Environmental Science.

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