

Common Black Ants

The common black ant (*Lasius Niger*) is a social insect living in a colony comprising of workers (sterile females), fertile males and queens (fertile females); all living and working together as a community much in the same way as Honey and Bumble Bees.

The nests are generally built out of doors within the ground but they may build them within the foundations of buildings or within cavity walls.

They will forage widely in search of food, which is usually why they will enter the house.

The common black ant does not transmit diseases or bite and is not considered to be a public health pest.

Life Cycle

Between mid-July and mid-September, the fertile individuals will mate. This takes place on the wing and consequently during this time the ants will swarm from their nests as flying ants. Although this may be a nuisance this stage is short-lived, lasting only two to three hours.

Following mating the males die but the females shed their wings and burrow into the soil where they will live over the winter. Eggs are laid in late spring and hatch into larvae finally pupating into worker ants. The life cycle takes two months to complete.

Control

By following ant trails in both directions you can find both the possible food sources and where entry points are. The most effective control is to remove any food sources acting as an attractant and concentrating any other efforts around any entry points. If possible seal entry points.

It may be possible to use crawling insect sprays or powders around entry points if they cannot be sealed but you must follow the instructions on the label and check its suitability for this kind of application.

Crawling insect powders and sprays are poisonous and should be used with caution. They should **not** be applied to food preparation or food storage areas.