

PEST CONTROL'S *MOST-TRUSTED* RESOURCE SINCE 1933

PMP Pest Management PROFESSIONAL

SMART STRATEGIES

***PMP's* exclusive
ant management
survey addresses
large infestations**

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ANTS: *Fierce, fascinating and profitable*

By Heather Patterson | Control Solutions Inc.

Year after year, ants rank as the top revenue-generating pest in urban and structural pest management. And year after year, many pest management professionals (PMPs) feel the frustration that comes with trying to tackle tough structural ant infestations.

When it comes to successful ant management strategies, inspection is a critical step for gathering key information. In many cases, knowing what questions to ask, what places to inspect, and sharpening your identification skills will help you resolve the problem.

Before arriving at the job site, PMPs must bring along a flashlight and a keen, investigative eye. Species preferences influence where ants nest and for what they are foraging. The source of the problem and the infestation potential also can vary.

Once you locate ant activity, quickly note some important characteristics of the situation

at hand. Observing for certain clues and finding answers to the following recommended questions can help you identify the pest ant, and thus determine the appropriate management approach:

1. Are the ants trailing? If so, can you follow the trail to the source, colony or entrance point?
2. Are the workers in the trail the same size? Or do they vary in size?
3. Are they foraging for a specific kind of food source (carbohydrates, fats or proteins)?
4. Are they more active in the daytime or nighttime?
5. Are they coming in from the outside?
6. Are they wood-dwelling or soil-dwelling? Are they a mound-building species?
7. Do they have one node or two nodes?

Be observant and mindful of the location, structure, its maintenance, moisture levels in and around the structure, the vegetation, conditions and sanitation. These factors can impact pest activity, and are usually different from one property to the next. Fortunately, the industry has access to a variety of very effective, often adaptable, ant control product options that can stand up to the conditions and pest pressures PMPs regularly face.

This year, Control Solutions Inc. (CSI) has launched a new product that delivers a lasting residual for the control of ants indoors and outdoors. Doxem NXT is a proprietary Combination Chemistry product that offers four distinct modes of action in one convenient aerosol can. Formulated with non-repellent chemistries, Doxem NXT is a great addition to your ant management service.

Product selection is a very important aspect of ant control, and formulations need to be chosen properly to avoid contamination or incompatibility. Because baits are a top choice for ant management, having a compatible product like Doxem NXT will deliver results and work nicely alongside bait products.

We here at CSI are proud to be a part of, and to support, this industry. We look forward to standing alongside PMPs everywhere as we face new challenges or obstacles that come our way. We strive to create effective and economical pest control solutions to help PMPs maximize results and income potential. At CSI, our mission and passion are to develop and deliver innovation you can apply.



HEATHER PATTERSON is
Technical Service Manager,
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Steps that ensure success

Callbacks and invasive species are mostly under control, PMP's exclusive survey shows

By Diane Sofranec | PMP Senior Editor

For pest management professionals (PMPs) who provide general pest control services, ant control was a lucrative segment of their business last year, *Pest Management Professional's* (PMP's) 2022 Ant Management Survey shows.

Our readers are crushing it, as the number of respondents who project \$5 million or more in ant management revenue in 2022 doubled over last year's figure. Callbacks may be a contributing factor, as 98 percent of respondents said they expect their callback rate to improve or remain flat in 2022.

Several steps will help ensure success, including thorough inspections, accurate identification, appropriate treatment and clear customer communication.

Chris Van Allen, managing partner of County Pest Control in Lehigh Valley, Pa., says he believes a proper treatment starts with identification. "Many times, we have been called to a place that's been fighting 'carpenter ants' for years, when in fact they were acrobat ants," he says. "Take the time to gather correct information, and that doesn't always mean what the customer tells you."

Steve Butler, owner of AAA Pest Management in Milwaukee, Wis., advises using the ant species' specific behaviors against it. "Also, as you gain more experience, don't be afraid to implement your own specialized thoughts, techniques and preferred pesticides when needed," he adds. "Remember, no two jobs are exactly the same."

To ensure his ant control services are a success,

Tim Rudisill inspects the interior and exterior of the home without any of his treatment equipment. "This gives me the freedom of looking in all areas without the urge to just treat the ants," says the director of service for A1 Termite and Pest Control in Lenoir, N.C. "Only after my full inspection will I treat."



Red imported
fire ants
(*Solenopsis
invicta*)

Coming across an invasive species, however, may require patience and the help of an entomologist or fellow PMP.

When asked about invasive species, *PMP* 2022 Ant Management Survey respondents from across the country mentioned several that have arrived in their pest management service areas. ghost (*Tapinoma melanocephalum*), tawny crazy (*Nylanderia fulva*), Asian needle (*Brachyponera chinensis*), big-headed (*Pheidole megacephala*), white-footed (*Technomyrmex albipes*), Argentine (*Linepithema humile*), red imported fire (*Solenopsis invicta*), and rover (*Brachymyrmex* spp.) ants were among the most frequently mentioned species.

Bill Melville, ACE, owner of Prizm IPM Solutions in West Linn, Ore., says he regularly meets with colleagues for lunch or coffee as their schedules allow to share their success stories, as well as their challenges. "I consider it a privilege to be able to call on a colleague and let them know of an issue I may be struggling with, only to have them offer a simple solution that worked for them," he explains. "And I routinely do the same in return." PMP

You can reach SOFRANEC at dsofranec@northcoastmedia.net or 216-706-3793.



BILL MELVILLE

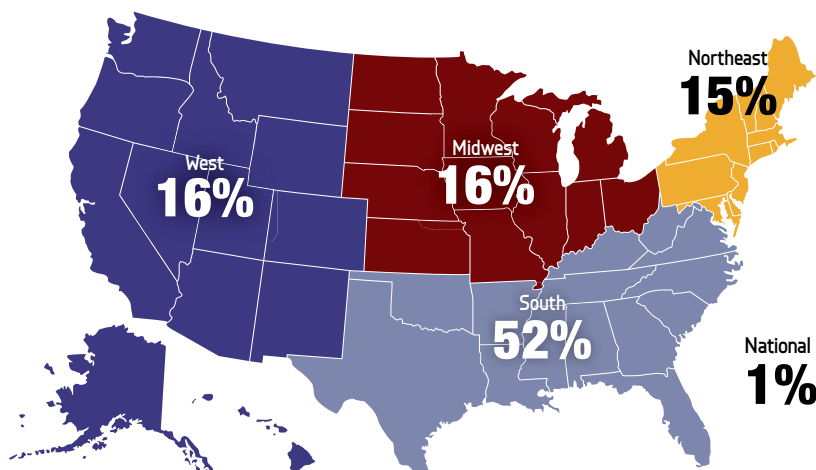


TIM RUDISILL

2022 ANT MANAGEMENT SURVEY

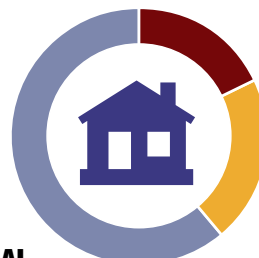
SOURCE: PMP ONLINE SURVEY CONDUCTED MARCH-JUNE 2022

AREA OF OPERATIONS



WEST: AK, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NM, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY
MIDWEST: OH, IN, IL, MI, WI, MN, MO, IA, ND, SD, NE, KS
SOUTH: AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX, VA, WV
NORTHEAST: CT, DE, ME, MD, MA, NJ, NH, NY, PA, RI, VT, D.C.

ANT MANAGEMENT REVENUE BY STRUCTURE TYPE



RESIDENTIAL

25% or less of ant management revenue: **18%**
 26% to 50% of ant management revenue: **21%**
 51% or more of ant management revenue: **61%**

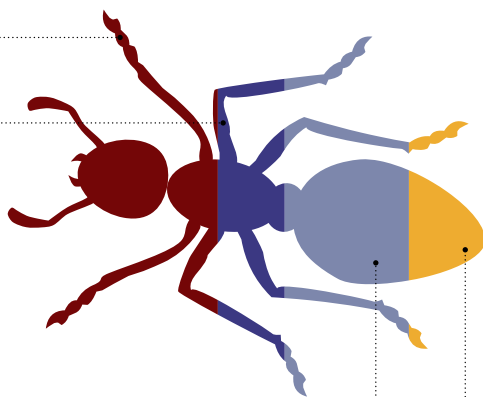
PROJECTED 2022 TOTAL REVENUE

\$499,999 or less: **44%**

\$500,000 to \$999,999: **14%**

\$1 million to \$4,999,999: **26%**

\$5 million or more: **16%**



COMMERCIAL

25% or less of ant management revenue: **79%**
 26% to 50% of ant management revenue: **16%**
 51% or more of ant management revenue: **5%**

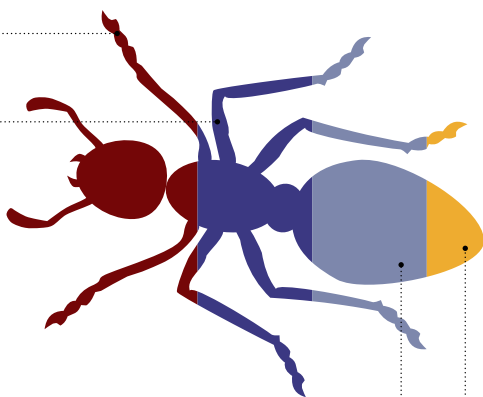
PROJECTED 2022 ANT MANAGEMENT REVENUE

\$49,999 or less: **40%**

\$50,000 to \$99,999: **24%**

\$100,000 to \$999,999: **24%**

\$1 million or more: **12%**



GOVERNMENT/ MUNICIPAL

25% or less of ant management revenue: **93%**
 26% to 50% of ant management revenue: **5%**
 51% or more of ant management revenue: **2%**



TOP 5 PEST ANTS BY NUMBER OF JOBS GENERATED

1 Carpenter ants (*Camponotus* spp.)



2 Odorous house ants (*Tapinoma sessile*)



3 Little black ants (*Monomorium minimum*)



4 Pavement ants (*Tetramorium caespitum*)



5 Argentine ants (*Linepithema humile*)



TOP 5 PEST ANTS BY NUMBER OF CALLBACKS GENERATED

1 Carpenter ants (*Camponotus* spp.)



2 Odorous house ants (*Tapinoma sessile*)



3 Argentine ants (*Linepithema humile*)



4 Little black ants (*Monomorium minimum*)



5 Acrobat ants (*Crematogaster ashmeadi*)



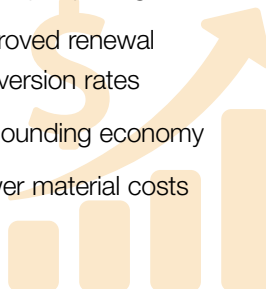
PROJECTED 2022 CALLBACK RATE COMPARED WITH 2021



50% expect improvement
48% expect to remain flat
2% expect to worsen

TOP OPPORTUNITIES TO GROWING ANT MANAGEMENT REVENUE

- 1 Fewer callbacks, which improves margins
- 2 Better job pricing
- 3 Improved renewal conversion rates
- 4 Rebounding economy
- 5 Lower material costs



TOP OBSTACLES TO GROWING ANT MANAGEMENT REVENUE

- 1 Lack of qualified technicians
- 2 Sluggish economy
- 3 Fierce pricing competition

PMPs discuss how they gained control of the largest ant infestations they treated

By Diane Sofranec | PMP Senior Editor

Different species, similar strategies

The reasons why pest management professionals (PMPs) encounter large ant infestations are as varied as the number of species.

The most common include a problem that spirals out of control when customers try to conquer the problem themselves, but make it worse, or a nest location that remains elusive, or a treatment that is not suitable for the species causing the infestation. Sometimes, a new invasive species takes time to identify and treat.

Pest Management Professional's (PMP's) 2022 Ant Management Survey asked readers to share the details about the largest ant infestation they battled, and they did not disappoint. Read on to learn about a few PMPs who managed to stop the spread.

PHARAOH ANTS (*MONOMORIUM PHARAONIS*)

Multi-unit housing presents unique ant control challenges. Asking tenants not to self-treat often is met with mixed results, as Central Exterminating Co. General Manager Robert Szczech can attest

when the Cleveland, Ohio-based pest control company serviced a 950-unit apartment complex infested with pharaoh ants.

"We found at least 100 different nesting sites inside wall voids, under sinks, through access panels in the hallways, and inside hot water tank rooms," he says. "We started using bait, and explained to the tenants to please

do not spray [over-the-counter aerosol pesticides]. Well, they did. Next thing you know, we had six technicians come in to do a complete cleanout."

Szczech says it took about a month to get the ants under control, using a combination approach of baits and liquids.

"The key to success was educating not only the tenants, but also the property management staff on pharaoh ants and their behavior," he adds. "We explained their life cycle, where they nest, and how they will bud. Without this knowledge and understanding among everyone, we would not have been successful."

WHITE-FOOTED ANTS (*TECHNOMYRMEX ALBIPES*)

Nests can be anywhere, even indoors. This was the case in a single-family home with white-footed ants in the master bathroom, says Randy Darrah, pest division manager for Slug-A-Bug in Melbourne, Fla.

"Every time we went to the house, we would find numerous dead ants on the floor, in the garden tub, and on the sink counter. But exterior inspections never revealed any activity," he explains. "Because all of the dead ants were at lower levels, we thought the ants were nesting in the shower wall. We drilled some small holes in the walls outside the shower and dusted the voids, and we treated baseboards and kickplates with a non-repellent liquid and baited sink countertops, but the ants kept appearing."

A Slug-A-Bug technician dusted the attic, but two weeks later, dead ants were still appearing, Darrah says.

"Finally, I saw one live ant on the ceiling, so I went into the attic above the bathroom and started pulling back the sheets of insulation. I eventually found a nest that extended the length of three insulation sheets, approximately 9 feet long," he says. "Broadcast dusting the attic above the bathroom hadn't proven effective because the insulation was acting like an umbrella, keeping the dust off the ants. I dusted the nest directly, solving the problem."



ROBERT SZCZECZ



RANDY DARRAH



From start to finish, it took Darrah and his technician about six visits over three months to eliminate the ants.

“The keys to solving this particular white-footed ant infestation were inspections and knowing that they prefer to nest high,” he says.

CARPENTER ANTS (*CAMPONOTUS* SPP.)

For Chris Van Allen, managing partner for County Pest Control in Lehigh Valley, Pa., patience proved rewarding for a carpenter ant issue at a newly purchased home.

“In the recent crazy housing market, the homeowner skipped the inspection on his \$700,000 house. As soon as spring kicked in, the entire house was filled with carpenter ants and alates. By the time he called us, he had been self-treating for over a month,” he says.

Upon inspection, Van Allen found live and dead carpenter ants in every room of the house, including the attic. Frass was not visible anywhere, he notes.

“Over two months,” Van Allen continues, “I went back three times. We figured out his chimney flashing had been pulled up years ago by a storm, and allowed water to run behind the siding. This caused extensive water damage to the wood and windows on that side of the home, and provided enough water for the ants to establish satellite colonies in the roofline and window frames.”

The homeowner was extremely grateful that Van Allen discovered the issue, because he soon learned from a contractor that his chimney was actually starting to pull away from the house. It took about 75 days before no ants were found either alive or dead, Van Allen says, noting that persistent pest control issues usually are an indication of a larger issue.

“The key to success in this particular situation was definitely patience. We can only work with the evidence that presents itself at the time. Visit regularly to check progress and gather more information,” Van Allen advises. “Insects will tell you everything you need to know; you just have to watch closely.”

Prizm IPM Solutions’ Bill Melville, ACE, also encountered a large carpenter ant infestation. The owner of the West Linn, Ore., pest control company explained it was in a large log home in a rural and forested setting.



**CHRIS
VAN ALLEN**

“The issue had been unrecognized for some time, and the home was severely infested. I found more than one carpenter ant species within the home,” he says. “I used dust formulations, so to get proper access, I arranged for scaffolding outside to reach high areas properly, being careful to inject dust into cracks and crevices. I used residual sprays for the exterior perimeter and all exterior areas that were contributing factors, such as stumps, trees and fallen logs.”

Melville adds that the challenges were the size of the home, accessibility — hence the use of scaffolding and ladders — and being thorough. He performed the job himself over an 8-hour period, and says the treatment was 100 percent effective after about three weeks.

“The key to success was using the proper equipment,” Melville says. “In this case, it required extensive and thorough dusting of all cracks and crevices, and this was made much easier by using one of the new, battery-powered dust applicators now available.”

ODOROUS HOUSE ANTS (*TAPINOMA SESSILE*, OR OHA)

Steve Butler, owner of AAA Pest Management in Milwaukee, Wis., recalls the biggest ant infestation he has seen in his 35 years in the pest control industry was OHA

“trailing in the millions/billions/trillions in every room of a home, and covering the exterior concrete block foundation.”

Two treatments with gel bait provided 100 percent elimination in two weeks, he says.

“The key to eliminating the extremely severe infestation was many tiny bait placements in areas everywhere ants were trailing, including the exterior foundation and all the way out to the garbage cans in the alley,” he explains. “If I would have just treated every room in this house, I would have been called back within a week because of the tremendous trailing outside.”

For all ant work, Butler advises, use the client’s word as to where they’ve seen ants as a starting point for your inspection: “Keep looking until you’re sure there is no more activity, or you’re likely to be back soon.” PMP

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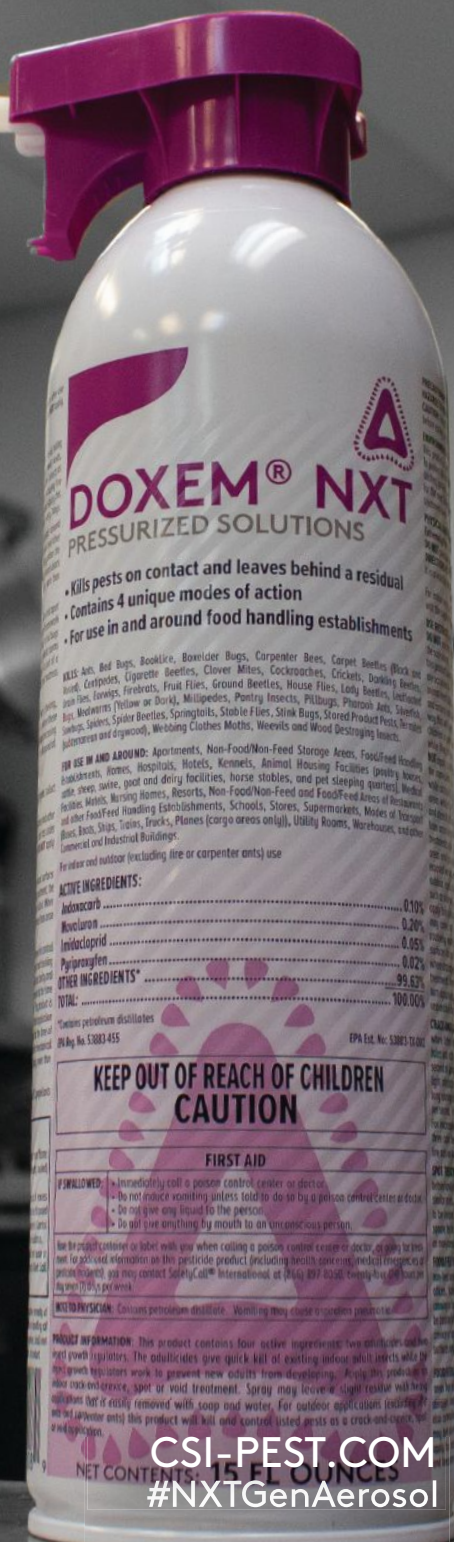
STEVE BUTLER

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