

**INSIDE GRUNDY COUNTY**  
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Have you ever been in your kitchen and noticed that some of the crumbs from supper were slowly moving across the floor? I noticed that the other evening and beckoned my kids to come over and investigate this unique phenomenon. Well, you have already guessed what was going on. There was an ant that was busy cleaning up the floor. Ordinarily, we wouldn't complain about the help but, we would much rather the help didn't come from the ant. The kids marveled at the fact that the crumb of food the ant was carrying was much larger than itself.

It seems like every spring and early summer we get ants in the house. They are generally easy to control with ant baits. Most ants are coming into the house from colonies located outdoors, and enter the home in search of food. They don't necessarily cause any problems, but become a nuisance much like the Asian Lady Beetle in the fall.

In order to stop the indoor travel of the ant, you must first identify the type of ant you are dealing with. This is important in determining the type of control to use. There are roughly a half dozen species of ants that are found in homes. Each has its own type of food it is looking for, which in turn determines what type of control measure will be most useful. For instance, odorous house ants prefer sweets; so ant baits will work best in controlling them. On the other hand, some species such as carpenter ants and grease ants are not attracted to bait and require a different control tactic. Once you have properly identified the species of ant, you can then decide on the appropriate course of action for control.

One of the first things you can do is look for cracks and crevices that may be serving as the entry point into your home. By sealing as many cracks and crevices as you can find, you will reduce the number, but probably won't completely exclude them. To most effectively control ants will require finding the nest and treating it. That is not always so easy. Ants that feed on baits will carry the bait back to their nests and after a few days traffic will stop. Ants will often travel the same path by establishing a chemical trail that leads them back to their nest. Observing the path of the ant should be useful in finding the nest. For insects not attracted to baits, you may want to treat room edges, cracks or crevices in the areas where the workers are abundant. Gradually their numbers should decline. Homeowners can use ready to use insecticides labeled for indoor ant control. Never use insecticides where they can contaminate food or dishes.

If you would like more information on ants, contact the Grundy Office of ISU Extension at 319-824-6979.