

Ant Control - the Correct Advice



One of the frustrating things about my job is that I not only have to debate and argue against the use of synthetic toxins, but some of the "organic" advice is bad as well. Some self-proclaimed organic experts still promote the use of copper sulfate, pyrethrum and other toxic materials. When the chemical proponents get into organic advice, it really gets weird.

Here's a classic example that I recently received in a newsletter:

If you're trying to stay organic, experts in fire-ant control say there are only three reasonable methods you should consider. The number one choice by almost all experts is Spinosad. It comes in liquid and granular forms, is environmentally safe, and will not be pulled up into the vegetable, even if used at higher-than-recommended levels.

Next on the list are products with the organically derived Rotenone liquid. Rotenone is also considered the best drench for a compost pile, even though Spinosad can be used there too.

The third organic alternative is Diatomaceous Earth (D.E.). But remember it must be food-grade D.E. in both veggies and compost piles.

None of these "reasonable" methods listed above are part of my advice. Spinosad is dangerous to honeybees so I rarely recommend it. It's also unnecessary. Recommending its use at higher rates than the label is not the best advice for sure.

Rotenone has not been a responsible organic recommendation for years. Besides being far too

toxic, it has been directly linked to serious disease. [Rotenone](#) is featured as one of the poisons of the week on [DirtDoctor.com](#). Diatomaceous Earth is only marginally effective on fire ant infestations and the food grade is not the term to look for. The legal and proper terms are feed grade, natural, amorphous and fresh water.

The fire ant control program that I have recommended for years and many people have used with great success is as follows:

1. Apply dry molasses at 20 lbs. per 1000 square feet. This single step eliminates the pest completely in most cases.
2. Drench problem mounds with the Mound Drench formula - orange oil, molasses and compost tea. Commercial products are available.
3. Apply beneficial nematodes. These beneficial worms also help control termites, grubs, fleas, ticks and other soil inhabiting pests.

More detailed info on fire ant control can be found here: [Fire Ant Control](#).

If you have any questions about this newsletter or any other topic, join me this weekend for my [Green Living and Dirt Doctor Radio shows](#). Shop in the [Green Living Store](#) for [Pest Control Products](#) and all of the products that I recommend in the Organic Program.

Naturally yours,



Howard Garrett

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