



Pests and Pesticides in Child-serving Facilities: An IPM Newsletter

Teen dies from fire ant stings at a Texas school football game

Karen M. Vail

What a sad reminder that fire ants can be a serious, life-threatening pest. A teen recently died from fire ant stings that occurred on a Texas school football field. While most people will react to a fire ant sting with a fiery, burning sensation and the formation of a pustule, a small percentage of the population is hypersensitive to fire ants stings and can go into anaphylactic shock and eventually die following a sting.

Texas schools typically broadcast bait for fire ants twice a year. Inspections of the property and mound densities determine how and where to treat for this pest. However, fire ant mounds are hard to detect when the ground is dry as the colonies will be mostly underground. Rain causes the ants to rebuild mounds to avoid flooding and thus make the mounds more visible.

Much of Tennessee has experienced above average rainfall this summer and fire ant mounds should be evident. Now is a perfect time of year to treat for fire ants.

Here are several resources to help you manage fire ants. Should you need further advice, please contact me.

Publications

[Managing Fire Ants In and Around Schools In Tennessee](#)
[2013 Fire Ant Products for Tennessee School's](#)

Websites

[Fire ants in Tennessee](#)
[eXtension Imported Fire Ants](#)

Webinars

[Don't Bug Me—Fall a Good Time to Control Fire Ants with Baits](#)

Videos

[Fire Ant Control Made Easy](#)
[Control Imported Fire Ants Using Broadcast Applications of Bait Products](#)

Special points of interest:

- > Teen dies from fire ant stings at TX school
- > What to do if stung by fire ants
- > Pest Spotlight: Fire Ants
- > Occasional Invader Webinar

When stung by fire ants:

- If just a few ants present, flick them off the skin. If many present at once, rub, push and fling the ants off your body briskly and vigorously. Fire ants will grab the skin with their jaws before stinging, so they can be difficult to remove. Check for clinging ants, especially on hands, and repeat.
- Treat the stung area with over-the-counter sting and bite medication.
- Antihistamines may help. (Follow directions carefully and be aware these may make you drowsy.)
- If severe chest pain, nausea, severe sweating, loss of breath, serious swelling or slurred speech occur, **seek emergency care immediately**. Anaphylactic shock can lead to death.

If you know you have severe allergies to stinging insects, its wise to keep an EpiPen (epinephrine auto injector) on hand and to wear a medical identification bracelet or necklace stating the allergy.

TX Teen dies from fire ant stings	1
What to do if stung by fire ants	2
Pest Spotlight: Imported Fire Ants	3
Occasional Invader Webinar	4
UT YEAH Contacts	5
Links	5

What to do when stung by fire ants

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Typical response to a fire ant sting.
Photo: UT E&PP

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Sources

[School Pest News, Volume 12, Issue 6, September 2013](#)
[Medical Problems Associated with Fire Ants](#)
[Insects and Scorpions](#)

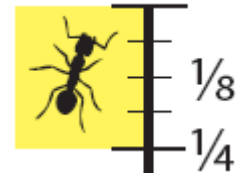


A school baseball field with 27 fire ant mounds poses a sting risk to players. Inspect fields at least twice a year and apply bait as needed. Broadcasted baits can take weeks to months to be effective, so plan treatments according to optimal weather conditions (70 - 90 degrees F and no rain), speed of bait activity and scheduled field use. Photo: UT E&PP

Pest Spotlight

Imported Fire Ants: Red, Black, and Hybrid (*Solenopsis invicta*, *Solenopsis richteri*, *S. invicta* X *S. richteri*)

Description: The workers range in size, 1/16 inch to 1/4 inch, and are black, reddish brown or red and black. The waist (pedicel) has two nodes. The antennae are 10-segmented with a two-segmented club. These ants respond quickly to nest disturbance and readily sting people and pets. Painful stings result in a pustule that lasts several days.



Life Cycle: Egg, larva, pupa and adult

Where to Look: Outside, colony mounds can be found anywhere from open areas in yards, gardens and pastures to areas adjacent to buildings, sidewalks, plants and other structures. Imported fire ants are predators/scavengers on many things, including insects, seeds and wildlife. In buildings, watch for ants trailing, and follow the trail to the nest. They usually nest outside.

Management: See action plans at <http://www.extension.org/pages/20444/school-ipm-action-plan-for-fire-ants>. Log all pest management activities into the Child-Serving Facility IPM Logbook (see schoolipm.utk.edu for example).



Red Imported Fire Ant. Credit: Stephanie Gil Louisiana State Arthropod Museum, Department of Entomology, Louisiana State University Agricultural Center



Black Imported Fire Ant. Credit: Stephanie Gil, Louisiana State Arthropod Museum, Department of Entomology, Louisiana State University Agricultural Center

Text modified and excerpted from Ring et al. 2010. Pest Identification Guide for Pests In and Around Buildings. LSU AgCenter Pub. 3158., pp. 52.

Fire Ant eXtension Don't Bug Me Webinar Series: *Home Invaders*, Oct. 2, 2 pm

The second Don't Bug Me webinar in the fall series will be Wednesday, Oct. 2 at 2 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time.

The half-hour webinar will focus on the importance of protecting households from home invaders as the weather cools in the fall.

Ellen Huckabay, a regional home grounds agent with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, says fall is an excellent time to begin treatment for pests seeking shelter inside before winter.

"The key to keeping your home invader-free is to begin preventative treatment in mid-September and early October," Huckabay says. "Caulking, screen repairs and vacuum cleaners will be most effective, but fast-acting insecticides applied around eaves and potential entryways may do the trick."



Kudzu bugs gathering on a window frame in fall.
Photo: Dan Suiter, UGA

Dr. Dan Suiter, an Associate Professor of Entomology at the University of Georgia, will present the upcoming webinar on Home Invaders. Suiter says the webinar will focus primarily on the kudzu bug, found in Georgia in 2009 and now as far west as Louisiana and as far north as Delaware.

"This webinar will focus specifically on biology and management of various pests that will predictably enter our homes in the fall in the southeastern U.S.," Suiter said. "Viewers will get a crash course in practical home solutions by tuning in to the webinar."

More information can be found at [Home Invaders](#) including how to connect to the webinar. On Oct. 2, participants can use [this link](#) to connect to the webinar.

The Don't Bug Me Webinar Series, which began earlier this year, included five webinars discussing fire ants, tramp ants and bed bugs. Links to view these archived webinars can be found [here](#).

The webinars are sponsored by [eXtension](#) and the [Alabama Cooperative Extension System](#). They are coordinated by the Imported Fire Ant eXtension Community of Practice.

Follow the Imported Fire Ant eXtension Community of Practice on [Facebook](#), Twitter (@FireAntInfo) and [Pinterest](#) for more information about upcoming events and practical in-home solutions.

As upcoming webinars approach, watch eXtension's [Don't Bug Me Webinar Series page](#) for more information on that particular webinar.

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**Comments or questions
 on this newsletter?
 Contact kvail@utk.edu**



Find us on facebook
<http://tinyurl.com/UrbanIPMTN>

For more information about IPM in Tennessee schools and other facilities, or to view past issues of *Pests and Pesticides in Child-serving Facilities*, please visit schoolipm.utk.edu OR utyeah.utk.edu

NATIONAL IPM INFORMATION
 eXtension's Pest Management In and Around Structures: Urban Integrated Pest Management
<http://www.extension.org/Urban%20Integrated%20Pest%20Management>

National School IPM
schoolipm.ifas.ufl.edu/

IPM in Schools Texas
<http://schoolipm.tamu.edu/>

IPM Institute of North America
www.ipminstitute.org/

School IPM PMSP—all schools IPM by 2015
http://www.ipminstitute.org/school_ipm_2015.htm

National Pest Management Association IPM
http://www.whatisipm.org/schools_IPM.asp

EPA schools
<http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/ipm/>

For further information about the IPM program at your school or in your county, contact your county Extension Agent or the school IPM Coordinator. For county agent contact information, please visit <https://utextension.tennessee.edu/Pages/offices.aspx>

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Precautionary Statement

To protect people and the environment, pesticides should be used safely. This is everyone's responsibility, especially the user. Read and follow label directions carefully before you buy, mix, apply, store or dispose of a pesticide. According to laws regulating pesticides, they must be used only as directed by the label.

Disclaimer

This publication contains pesticide recommendations that are subject to change at any time. The recommendations in this publication are provided only as a guide. It is always the pesticide applicator's responsibility, by law, to read and follow all current label directions for the specific pesticide being used. The label always takes precedence over the recommendations found in this publication.

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