



## **Texas Imported Fire Ant Research and Management Plan**

**Method Demonstration Showcase Study:  
Countryside Property Owner's Association, San Antonio, TX.  
1999**

**Nathan L. Riggs, EA - IPM  
Texas Agricultural Extension Service - Bexar County**

The Countryside Property Owner's Association is the second homeowner association in Bexar County to be selected as a "Showcase" Program by the Texas Imported Fire Ant Research and Management Plan. By agreeing to be a showcase program, the neighborhood will be studied on a closer level regarding biological surveys of ant species in the area at various times before and after treatments, resident surveys of fire ant impacts in the neighborhoods, and treatment histories of the neighborhood.

### **The Neighborhood and It's Residents**

The Countryside neighborhood is located in north San Antonio and bordered on the north by Bitters Road, on the west by US 281 North, on the south by Salado Creek, and on the east by the Devonshire Place Subdivision. The neighborhood is composed of 190 homes inhabited by middle to upper-middle income earners of diverse ethnic backgrounds. Lot sizes average 7,000 to 10,000 square feet including the home. All homes are older than 10 years. All lots contain mature oak, ash, hackberry, cedar, and mesquite trees and have St. Augustine lawns with a slight mix of bermuda grass and weeds. Based on a community-wide survey developed by the Extension Service, homeowners reported that they spent anywhere from \$1 to \$100 per year on fire ant treatment chemicals and such.

### **Biological Surveys and Mound Counts**

Prior to initiation of the study in April 1999, 28 lawns were selected as locations for biological survey data collection. Four small plastic condiment cups were placed in the front lawns of each selected location and baited with small pieces of canned tuna. Cups were allowed to remain undisturbed for at least 30 minutes before being collected and capped. Any cups containing ants were retained and placed in a freezer to kill the ants for later ID. Cups were given a unique ID# for each location. Table 1 outlines the results of the pre-treatment biological survey and fire ant mound counts for the front and back lawns of the location.

**Table 1. Biological Survey Results and Fire Ant Mound Counts Prior To And After Treatment Occurred On April 24, 1999 In The Countryside Neighborhood**

Location	Turf Type	Pre-Trt (4/21/99)		Post Trt (6/24/99)	
		Ant Species*	# of Fire Ant Mounds	Ant Species	# of Fire Ant Mounds
11	St. Augustine/Bermuda	BHA, AA	0	BHA, AA	0
12	St. Augustine	2 spp BHA, FHA, LBA	0	None Trapped	0
13	St. Augustine	None trapped	0	FC, TA	0
14	St. Augustine/Bermuda	BHA, FP, LBA	0	LBA	0
21	St. Augustine	BHA, AA, FP	0	FP, LBA, BHA	0
22	St. Augustine	BHA, CA, FP	0	BHA, LBA	0
23	St. Augustine	FHA, BHA, LBA	0	2 spp BHA, LBA	0
24	St. Augustine	AA, FHA, BHA	0	FHA, BHA	0
31	St. Augustine	BHA	0	2 spp BHA	0
32	St. Augustine	FP, PA, BHA, FHA	0	PA, FHA	0
33	St. Augustine	FP	0	FP, FHA	0
34	St. Augustine	IFA, AA, FP	3	FP, BHA, LBA	0
41	St. Augustine	BHA, FP, AA	0	BHA, FP	0
42	St. Augustine	IFA, BHA	2	FM, TA	0
43	St. Augustine	FP, FC, BHA	0	BHA, FP	0
44	St. Augustine	2 spp BHA	0	IFA, FM, TA, LBA, FHA	2
51	St. Augustine	FHA, BHA	0	IFA, BHA, FHA, FP	2
52	St. Augustine	IFA, FHA	4	BHA	0
53	St. Augustine	BHA, TA	0	TA, BHA	0
54	St. Augustine	FP, AA, BHA	0	AA, BHA	0
61	St. Augustine	TA, BHA, FHA	0	BHA	0
62	St. Augustine	BHA	0	AA, BHA	0
63	St. Augustine	TA, BHA	0	FHA, BHA, LBA	0
64	St. Augustine	PA, FP, BHA	0	FP, BHA	0
71	St. Augustine	IFA, BHA	2	BHA	0
72	St. Augustine	FP, BHA	0	FM	0
73	St. Augustine	BHA	0	BHA	0
74	St. Augustine	BHA, FHA	0	BHA, FHA	0

\* The names of the ant species are abbreviated as follows: IFA=Red Imported Fire Ant (*Solenopsis invicta*); FHA=False Honey Ant (*Prenolepis imparis*); FM=*Forelius mccookii*; FP=*Forelius pruinosus*; PA=Pavement Ant (*Tetramorium caespitum*); BHA=Big Headed Ant (*Pheidole* spp.); LBA=Little Black Ant (*Monomorium minimum*); CA=Carpenter Ant (*Camponotus* spp.); AA=Acrobat Ant (*Crematogaster* spp.); TA=Thief Ant (*Solenopsis molesta*)

## **Organizing the Program**

Saturday, April 24, 1999 was selected as the neighborhood “Fire Ant Day.” This particular neighborhood contracted with Centex Hometeam Services™ to perform broadcast bait applications in all front lawns in the neighborhood. Ascend® fire ant bait (active ingredient = abamectin) was selected as the treatment by the pest control company. The homeowner association negotiated a flat fee of \$1200 with Centex to treat the neighborhood. Each front lawn was treated with 5oz of bait. Homeowners were responsible for spot-treating nuisance mounds after the initial bait application. A short time after the Fire Ant Day, surveys were mailed to each of the 190 homeowners in the neighborhood to gather background information on fire ant problems and other ant-related costs.

## **Results**

Once the day had ended, 187 homes had been treated on “Fire Ant Day.” Participation was not 100% due to the fact the association did not notify the residents that this “free” treatment would occur. As a result, some residents refused treatment on the day that the baits were to be applied because of the lack of prior notification. To get an accurate cost per homeowner, the \$1200 fee was divided among the 187 treated lawns to arrive at a per-home treatment cost of \$6.42 (includes the cost of bait and labor). All of the 28 lawns selected for biological surveys were treated. At the time of this report, 68 surveys had been returned for analysis. A post-treatment biological survey was conducted on June 24, 1999. Table 1 outlines the results of the biological survey and mound counts in the same 28 selected lawns.

## **Plans for the Future**

Another biological survey is planned for September 1999 and plans for a fall Fire Ant Day have not been discussed at the time of this report. Due to the nature of the product used, a neighborhood-wide treatment in the fall may not be necessary, but rather spot-treatments of random mounds that appear.

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