**Fire Ant Control**

With the recent moisture, fire ant mounds have been popping up all over. With the warmer temperatures, fire ants’ activity levels will only increase. The recent years of drought have actually hurt fire ant populations. Not that we are out of the dry spell, but we did at least get a little moisture with a little more in the forecast. These rains will make fire ants more active, and you can expect to see an increase in mounds in your yards and gardens.

The Two Step Fire Ant Control method for controlling fire ants has been proven to be effective and if you’re not on the program, now is the time to start. The first step of the Two Step method emphasizes applying broadcast bait when the ants are actively foraging. As soon as the temperatures warm up, it will be an excellent time to apply the broadcast bait. There are many different brand names for bait products but basically, they all work because the worker ants bring it back to the mound and feed it to the queen and other ants.

Here are a few key points when applying baits:

* Make sure that you use fresh bait, preferably a new container that has never been opened.
* Apply when the ground and grass are dry, and rain is not expected for 48 hours.
* Apply when ants are looking for food- this is usually in the late afternoon or evening.
* Apply with a hand-held seed spreader- DO NOT mix the product with fertilizer or seed.
* Re-apply baits in about 6 months.

The second portion of the Two Step method is treating individual mounds. Limit step two mound treatments to those mounds located near the house or other sensitive areas where you want fast control. If you only have a few mounds in your yard, this may be all you need to do. For this treatment use a product designed for MOUND treatment. It can be a drench or a granular product. Always follow the label directions on the bait and mound treatment products that you choose.

If you live in a neighborhood, it would be a good idea to get all your neighbors to complete the same treatments. This will greatly improve your control efforts. It takes longer for fire ants to re-infest when larger areas and multiple yards are treated with the Two-Step Method. That means fewer applications and less time spent controlling ants.

For more information on the Texas Two Step method, call or come by the office and pick up a Two-Step pamphlet.