



Argentine Ants need to be removed from Taputaputa campground

What are Argentine ants and why are they a problem?

Argentine ants are small honey-brown coloured ants which build super -colonies of immense size.

They are amongst the 100 most invasive species on Earth, smothering baby birds, plants and anything else in their path. Although not poisonous to humans, they can be irritating and cause allergic reactions in some people.

In the Far North, Argentine ants are already established in Kaitaia, Houhora and Doubtless Bay.

The Department of Conservation in Kaitaia has kept up a vigilant monitoring system to stop them invading the Te Paki area. This has enabled us to detect them quickly. DOC first confirmed the presence of Argentine ants at Taputaputa on Wednesday the 2nd of February 2011.

What is the Department of Conservation doing to get rid of the ants?

Since the ants have been discovered DOC has closed the affected area of the camp. DOC has been carefully surveying the area to determine exactly where the ants are.. The ants have been pin-pointed to a small area at the Taputaputa campground adjacent to the stream.

The next step is to eradicate the ants from the campground.

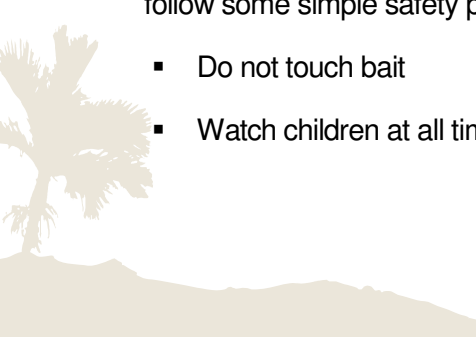
How will the Department eradicate the ants?

On Wednesday the 9th of February 2011 (weather dependant) the whole campground will be closed. The day area will still be open and available for camping. An ant bait called Xtinguish will be laid around the camp to kill the ants. Warning signs will be in place.

6-8 weeks after the initial treatment, another treatment day will be undertaken. To be successful, treatment must be carried out after three fine days, with another 3 fine days after the treatment day. Therefore all dates in this factsheet are subject to change. Warning signs will be in place around the treatment area, so you will know when treatment is actually taking place.

What's Xtinguish and is it harmful?

Xtinguish is the only bait that can kill Argentine ants. Xtinguish is a paste that contains Fipronil (0.1g/kg); the same toxin used in flea powder for cats and dogs. The ants are attracted to the bait and take it back to their colonies to share. Xtinguish is not harmful to animals or humans; however it is still sensible to follow some simple safety precautions:

- Do not touch bait
 - Watch children at all times
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- Stay out of restricted areas
- To get advice on poisoning contact your local doctor, hospital or the National Poison's Centre (03) 474 7000

The use of Fipronil requires the notification of the Medical Officer of Health.

Where pesticides are used, DOC assesses the operation on public conservation land on behalf of the Environmental Risk Assessment Authority (ERMA). DOC Managers follow procedures approved by ERMA and apply conditions to ensure that all legal and policy requirements are met, and that any potential risks of the operation are managed.

How can I get more information about Argentine ants or the eradication programme?

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