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# LITTLE FIRE ANT FACT SHEET 1

(VERSION 1.2, JUNE 2012)

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## TREATMENT OF POTTED PLANTS INFESTED WITH LITTLE FIRE ANTS

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Potted plants make a great habitat for Little Fire Ants. Often you can not see them because they hide in the foliage or in the potting mix but nevertheless, they are there. If you move, give away or sell these plants, there is a good chance the recipient will get a nasty surprise when they bring the plant to their home. Once at their new home, the ants will sneak out of the plants and rapidly spread throughout the new property.

Be a good neighbor, relative or small scale plant seller, and treat your plants before you move them to make sure you are not spreading Little Fire Ants at the same time. Follow the simple instructions below to ensure you are only moving ant-free plants!

This is even more important if you are going to take a potted plant or foliage with you to a neighbor island. AT the moment, only the Big Island has uncontrolled little fire ants, and no-one would want to accidentally transport this pest to another island.

Potted plants can easily be sprayed and drenched with products available from your local hardware, plant center or chemical supply store. The products registered for this purpose contain carbaryl and are available in several proprietary formulations. Two of these are:<sup>1</sup>

**Eliminator Bug Killer Sevin Concentrate**  
(EPA reg 264-334-71004)

**Gardentech Sevin Concentrate Bug Killer**  
(EPA reg 264-334-71004)

Other proprietary products containing carbaryl at 22.5% that have label instructions for drenching and spraying potted plants may be available and suitable for this purpose. Please consult the staff at your hardware, chemical supply or farm exchange for advice on these products.

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<sup>1</sup> Listing of these proprietary products does not constitute an endorsement by The Hawaii Department of Agriculture or the Hawaii Invasive Species Council. Other similar products containing 22.5% carbaryl and with labels listing your situation and pest may be available. Commercial products may also be available with different rates of active ingredient – adjust mix rates accordingly.

## DRENCHING PLANTS

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Often, Little Fire Ants will make nests in soil or potting medium of potted plants. You may not always be able to see them there, so drench any plants you sell or give away a day or so before moving them. Mix  $\frac{3}{4}$  oz of Sevin per gallon of water and gently water the soil of your pot plants until all the soil is wet. For “ready-to-spray” products, turn the water on slowly and leave it at low pressure. Also, make sure you have a back-wash prevention device installed to the faucet. When treating your plants it is safest to stand them on lawn or soil so that the soil can absorb any excess mixture. Always read the product label carefully and follow all safety precautions.

Most important is to make sure all the soil in the potting mix is thoroughly wetted by the chemical.

## FOLIAR SPRAYS

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Make a solution of 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz Sevin concentrate per 1 gallon of water. Spray the plant foliage with this mixture until the entire plant has been wetted. It is important to make sure any cracks, crevices and hollows are wetted as this is where Little Fire Ants often make their nests. Once the plant has been sprayed, allow it to dry before moving or permitting other people or pets to go near them.

## SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

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- **ALWAYS** read the label of the product you buy very carefully to make sure your plant species and situation is listed.
- Follow **ALL** safety directions on the label.
- **ALWAYS** make sure to keep other people and pets away from the treated plants until they are completely dry.
- Anything written on the label of the product you choose to use supersedes all recommendations in this document.

The minimum recommended safety equipment you should use are as follows:

- Long sleeved shirt and long pants
- Shoes and socks
- Chemical resistant gloves
- Chemical resistant apron when mixing chemicals, loading or cleaning spills.

## WANT MORE INFORMATION?

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go to [www.littlefireants.com](http://www.littlefireants.com)

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