

Texas Leaf-cutting ant control in Agricultural Use Sites

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The Texas leaf-cutting ant (<http://citybugs.tamu.edu/factsheets/landscape/ants/ent-1002/>) damages plants by collecting pieces of leaves which are returned to the colony. The leaves are used to culture a fungus on which these ants feed. Leaf-harvesting activities can damage ornamental and food plants. Amdro[®] Ant Block, containing the active ingredient hydramethylnon, is currently the only product available for treating colonies in non-agricultural sites. In the past, no treatments were available to use in agricultural use sites such as citrus and pecan orchards, hay pastures and grain crops.

Two changes have recently (October 2011) occurred to help manage Texas leaf-cutting ants in agricultural areas.

Definitions of field borders

The first change deals with the definition of field borders. The current label does not allow for use of this product in food and livestock production or other use sites where leaf-cutting ant colonies occasionally occur. However, the "towns" or central colonies of this ant species often are located near or on adjacent properties, but not inside agricultural sites. Boundaries of agricultural use sites have recently (July 2011) been defined by the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) and approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The definitions are:

Orchard - (or grove). A grouping of trees or shrubs arranged in rows to facilitate production efforts; or, a randomly spaced group of trees or shrubs of usually native origin. The boundaries of which extend to the outside perimeter of the drip line of the canopy on all sides of the area or the group.

Field - An area of land with or without a crop, defined on all sides by a change of vegetation type or by a man made or artificial structure (fence), natural barrier or road.

(Sources: Ed Gage, Pesticide Registration Coordinator, Section 3 Texas Registrations, Special Registrations, S-18, 24(c), 2ee, EUP, Texas Department of Agriculture, P.O. Box 12847, Austin, Texas 78711, Phone: (512) 463-7544; Fax: 1-888-216-9860; ed.gage@TexasAgriculture.gov; www.TexasAgriculture.gov and Jim Roelofs, Government and International Services Branch Field and External Affairs, Division (7506C) Office of Pesticide Programs USEPA, Roelofs.Jim@epamail.epa.gov, Tel. 703-308-2964, FAX 703-305-5884)

These definitions provide agricultural producers with guidelines on where Amdro[®] Ant Block can be currently applied according to the label. Amdro[®] Ant Block is a granular ant bait (de-fatted corn grit with soybean oil containing hydramethylnon) with sucrose added to make the food lure attractive to Texas leaf-cutting ant foraging workers as well as other sugar-feeding ant species. For Texas leaf-cutting colony treatments, 3/4 lb product is broadcast on top of the cut ant "town" (location of highest concentration of mounds). Reduction or elimination of ant activity in treated colonies occurs slowly over 4 to 6 weeks. After this time colonies may resume activity, requiring re-treatment.

Label Expansion to Include Certain Agricultural Sites

The second change has been an update to the label to include some new sites. In October 2011, the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) issued a Special Local Needs (24(c)) label to allow the use of Amdro® Ant Block in fruit, nut and orchard crops, pastures and rangelands and forage production crops (**Appendix 1**). This special local needs label (SLN TX-110006), also referred to as a 24(c) Registration, has been signed by TDA and has 90 day for review by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Until EPA makes a recommendation, the 24c label is a valid registration (Pers. Com. Dale R. Scott, Pesticide Registration Specialist, Texas Department of Agriculture, P.O. Box 12847, Austin, TX 78711, (512) 936-2535 Phone (888) 216-9860 Fax, dale.scott@TexasAgriculture.gov Oct. 25, 2011 10:24 AM). To be in compliance with the law, the supplemental label must be in possession of the applicator at the time of treatment.

The 24c label allows the use of Amdro Ant Block in agricultural sites if the Amdro Ant Block is placed in a baited trap. The Texas Department of Agriculture defines a baited trap as a container in which an insecticidal bait is placed with the intent to attract pest species to feed and trap them within the trap or contain the pest or allow the pest to exit but prevent off target species to have access to the bait or provide protection to humans and pets.

Ant perimeter bait stations (**Fig. 1**) are typically sold with plastic spikes that hold them in place (See: http://www.bgequip.com/HTML/pc_ipm/ipm_baitstations.html). For Texas leaf-cutting colony or “town” treatment, bait stations should be placed randomly around the town and/or along foraging trails. Stations should be monitored for foraging ant activity and possibly moved periodically to locations where foraging ants are active. In hot summer months, ants are active mainly at night, but during cooler weather they may be active during the day.



Fig. 1. Ant perimeter bait station, closed (left) and opened (right) used to apply Amdro® Ant Block (hydramethylnon) to Texas leaf-cutting ant colony “towns” in agricultural use sites.

Acknowledgments

The author is grateful for reviews by Drs. Chris Sansone and Mike Merchant.

Appendix 1. Special local needs (24(c)) label for use of Amdro® Ant Block.

AMDRO® ANT BLOCK

(EPA Reg. No. 73343-2)
(EPA SLN NO. TX-110006)

FOR DISTRIBUTION & USE ONLY WITHIN TEXAS

| Active Ingredient | By Wt. |
|--|---------|
| Hydramethylnon (CAS No. 67485-29-4)..... | 0.88% |
| Other Ingredients..... | 99.12% |
| Total..... | 100.00% |

KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN

CAUTION

DIRECTIONS FOR USE

It is a violation of Federal law to use this product in a manner inconsistent with its labeling.

Other than uses described below, do not apply this product by any method not specified on the Amdro® Ant Block Home Perimeter Ant Bait product label. This labeling must be in the possession of the user at the time of pesticide application.

Do not apply this product in a way that will contact workers or other persons, either directly or through drift. Only protected handlers may be in the area during application. For any requirements specific to Texas, consult the agency responsible for pesticide regulation.

The following definitions apply to the use of this product in Texas:

Orchard - (or grove). A grouping of trees or shrubs arranged in rows to facilitate production efforts; or, a randomly spaced group of trees or shrubs of usually native origin. The boundaries of which extend to the outside perimeter of the drip line of the canopy on all sides of the area or the group.

Field - An area of land with or without a crop, defined on all sides by a change of vegetation type or by a man made or artificial structure (fence), natural barrier or road.

Baited trap - A container in which an insecticidal bait is placed with the intent to attract pest species to feed and trap them within the trap or contain the pest or allow the pest to exit but prevent off target species to have access to the bait or provide protection to humans and pets.

All trap devices must be anchored so the bait is secure from all off-target animals yet available to the Texas leaf cutter ant.

| CROPS | PESTS | PRODUCT RATES PER ACRE | SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS |
|--|---|------------------------|--|
| <p>Fruit and nut orchard crops such as citrus, pecans, peaches, plums</p> <p>Livestock production areas such as pastures & rangelands</p> <p>Forage production fields such as small grains, alfalfa, hay pastures</p> | <p>Texas leaf-cutting ant, <i>Atta texana</i></p> | <p>Up to 2.0 lb.</p> | <p>Place AMDRO ANT BLOCK into bait stations in the field, using 1 to 2 oz product per bait station to apply a total of 3/4 lb (12 oz) on and around the central concentration of leaf-cutting ant mounds (the "town"), indicating the location of the colony. Allow ants to remove bait from bait stations over a period of days to a week. Ants forage at night during warmer weather. Stations may need to be re-filled or re-located periodically to allow for maximum bait consumption. Colonies accepting sufficient quantity of bait should decline over a period of 4 to 6 weeks of treatment. After several months, some colonies may recover from the initial treatment and may require a second application.</p> <p>Do not contaminate kitchen utensils by use or storage. Do not apply more than 2.0 lb per acre. Do not apply AMDRO ANT BLOCK to the ground around these crops or to any part of the crop plant. Do not allow animals to feed on AMDRO ANT BLOCK or gain access to bait stations.</p> <p>Several bait stations are available. Select those with entrances large enough for access by leaf cutter ants, and labeled for use by filling/refilling with granular ant baits (e.g., Perimeter Patrol System™ http://www.bgequip.com/pps11.htm)</p> |
| <p>Agricultural Use Requirements</p> <p>Use this product only in accordance with its labeling and with the Worker Protection Standard, 40 CFR Part 170. This standard contains requirements for the protection of agricultural workers on farms, forests, nurseries, and handlers of agricultural pesticides. It contains requirements for training, decontamination, notification, and emergency assistance. It also contains specific instructions and exceptions pertaining to the statements on this label about personal protective equipment (PPE) and restricted-entry interval. The requirements on the product only apply to uses of this product that are covered by the Worker Protection Standard.</p> <p>Do not enter or allow worker entry into treated areas during the restricted entry interval (REI) of 12 hours.</p> <p>The PPE required for early entry to treated areas that is permitted under the Worker Protection Standard and that involves contact with anything that has been treated, such as plants, soil, or water, is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coveralls • Chemical resistant gloves (such as rubber or waterproof gloves) • Shoes plus socks | | | |

24(c) Registrant
AMBRANDS
2030 Powers Ferry Road, Ste. 370, Atlanta, GA 30339

EPA SLN No. TX-110006