Springtime Ants

Questions:

Q: Would aromatic cedar mulch attract termites if placed near foundation – or repel them?
A: Unfortunately, there is not a clear answer as to whether mulch serves as a food source for termites. Laboratory studies show that termites will eat mulch, but field studies suggest that mulch beds are not more attractive for foraging termites than gravel mulches. See the following resources for details: https://www.pctonline.com/article/termites---mulch/ & https://www.howtolookatahouse.com/Blog/ewExternalFiles/MulchTermite.pdf

Q: Will the aromatic cedar mulch become a host for artillery fungus?
A: There is evidence that cedar and cypress mulch are more resistant to artillery fungus than other varieties: https://meridian.allenpress.com/jeh/article/19/2/89/79524/Influence-of-Mulch-Characteristics-on-Sporulation

Q: Would diluted hydrogen peroxide in house plants get rid of ants?
A: There are numerous reasons why we do not (and cannot) recommend the use of home remedies for pest control. These include safety for you, and product efficacy (will it work to control the pest?). For and informative discussion: http://www.npic.orst.edu/pest/home-remedies.html

Q: Do the boric acid-based baits work well and treat odorous house ant?
A: Baits that are sugar-based and contain boric acid can work if you are as persistent – they take time to have a noticeable impact. Remove competing food sources to ensure the bait is effective.

Q: How can I get rid of carpenter ants?
A: Carpenter ants can be baited, but eliminating the conditions that attract them to the home (water damage) is more important. Furthermore, carpenter ant control is complicated because nests indoors are often satellite colonies of outdoor nests that must be eliminated to achieve long-term control. See our factsheet for more details: https://hdl.handle.net/1813/43834

Q: Is it bad to have ants on your property if they don’t come inside the house?
A: If ants are not getting inside your home, but live on your property, they are beneficial and should be tolerated. For example, a common lawn ant, the “turfgrass ant” is an important predator of sod webworms, grubs, and other cool-season lawn pests. It does not bite people, and the mounds are not obvious in grass is mowed at proper lawn height (three inches).

Q: I’m finding dried up ants with wings near floor molding in my house. What could they be?
A: Dead ants indoors with wings could be citronella ants. Some resources to identify ants:

- https://www.pestworld.org/pest-guide/ants/
- http://www.fmcprosolutions.com/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=dsESXNRwKA0%3D&tabid=1232&mid=2082

Q: Is switching baits a good practice?
A: Different ants prefer different baits at different times of the year. Some ants prefer sweets, others prefer proteins or lipids. A simple test to figure out which bait type is preferred is to put out peanut
butter and jelly side-by-side. If ants feed on peanut butter, use a protein or lipid bait. If jelly – use a sugar bait.

Additional Resources:
- NYSIPM Ants Page: https://nysipm.cornell.edu/whats-bugging-you/ants/
- Tick Protection in Spring: https://youtu.be/mn1bP70DTvU
- NYSIPM Tick Education Campaign: www.DontGetTickedNY.org