Top Choice

Pest Treatment Protocols · https://milo.masseyservices.com/docs/top-choice/

TOPCHOICE® insecticide is a granular fipronil product designed for broadcast applications for control of fire ants, fleas, and ticks. TOPCHOICE® provides control of fire ants in home and commercial lawns, golf courses, sports fields, school grounds, and parks. A single application controls existing fire ant colonies in addition to preventing new colonies from forming.

The Problem

The red imported fire ant (Solenopsis invicta) was introduced into the United States around 1940. It is presently found in 14 states across the southern U.S., north to Virginia, south to Florida and west to portions of California. The biggest problems associated with these ants is their aggressive nature and stinging when their mounds or food sources are disturbed. Symptoms of the sting include burning and itching, followed by the development of a pustule that may take a week or more to heal. Scratching these pustules can lead to secondary bacterial infections and can leave permanent scars. As with all insect stings, certain persons are hypersensitive to fire ant venom and may suffer chest pains, nausea or lapse into a coma from one sting.

What To Look For

The red imported fire ant builds mounds in almost any type of soil, but prefers open sunny areas found on lawns. The size of the mound depends upon the soil characteristics and the frequency with which the mound is disturbed. The above-ground portion of the mound is usually conical and can reach 10-12 inches in height. The tops of mounds are less well developed in very sandy soils, or where the land is frequently disturbed. Established colonies produce new queens and winged males during warm spring and summer months. Mated queens establish a new colony by digging a small hole in the soil and closing up the entrance. Inside the chamber, the queen lays eggs several times over the next week. The emerging larvae are fed by the queen until they pupate and tiny workers emerge. These workers break open the nesting chamber and begin foraging for insect food and start to enlarge the nest. The queen, now fed by workers, will continue to lay eggs. A colony established in June could contain 15,000 individuals one year later. A mature colony (3 years old) may contain

100,000 to 500,000 workers and several hundred winged forms

The Solution

In general, nonchemical methods are ineffective against fire ants. Digging up or tilling mounds usually results in dispersal of ants or movement of nests. The most effective control programs incorporate the use of bait products and/or broadcast applications of insecticides. Spraying insecticide on foraging ants will not control a colony and spraying a nest may cause the colony to disperse which could make control even more difficult. This protocol uses two products for the control of red imported fire ants. Top Choice utilizing the active ingredient fipronil, a non-bait granular insecticide that provides single-application control of fire ants for up to a full year. It is formulated specifically for broadcast application with commercially available spreaders. Top Choice provides control of existing colonies, as well as prevents new infestations. The second product available for fire ant control is Advion Fire Ant Bait, which provides effective supporting control of fire ants. Baits in general should be applied at the outer edge of fire ant mounds or when ants are foraging (temperatures from 70-90°F are best). In hotter weather, bait is best applied in the evening. The ants will then forage overnight on the bait. Maximize results of baiting by limiting exposure to extreme heat, rain or irrigation, and direct sunlight. Baits placed (spot treated) around ant mounds will be gathered by ants quickly limiting sun exposure.

Top Choice Fire Ant Insecticide – Lawn Application Protocol

Top Choice can be applied any time of year on home lawns, parks, sports fields, and golf turf. Best results occur when applied before peak fire ant activity spring or early summer. Controls existing colonies in 4–6 weeks and prevents new colonies becoming established for up to 12 months.

Application Rate

The label broadcast rate is 2 lbs. of Top Choice per 1,000 sq ft, equivalent to 87 lbs. per acre. Use the Massey Top Choice Calculator to determine the volume of Top Choice needed and the cost to the customer. This is a single annual application, do not reapply within the same year. Address break through activity of fire ants in treated areas with spot or targeted broadcast applications of Advion Fire Ant Bait. Spot treating, baiting with Advion FA around visible mounds before making the Top Choice application may expedite results.

Equipment Needed

A broadcast spreader (rotary or drop).

Personal protective equipment:

Gloves

Long sleeves/pants

Dust mask if windy

How to Apply (Step-by-Step)

Preparation

Mow the lawn 1–2 days before application for best soil contact.

Ensure the grass is dry at the time of spreading.

Check wind: apply when wind is under 10 mph to avoid drift.

Spreader Calibration

Set your spreader to deliver 2 lbs./1,000 sq ft.

Test on a driveway or tarp to confirm output.

Broadcast Application

Walk at a steady pace, overlapping slightly for even coverage.

Apply across the entire lawn, not just on mounds—Top Choice works preventively.

Watering

Lightly irrigate with ¼–½ inch of water after application.

This moves the fipronil into the soil where ants contact it.

Do not overwater—heavy irrigation can reduce effectiveness.

What to Expect After Application

Existing colonies begin to decline within 4–6 weeks.

New mound formation is prevented for up to one year.

LAWN APPLICATION OF ADVION GRANULAR FIRE ANT BAIT

Equipment: Scotts Hand Held Spreader

APPLICATION TECHNIQUE

After baiting around mounds, apply Top Choice to the lawn. The rate of bait to apply is 2 lbs. per 1,000 square feet. Wipe out the residue of any other products from your Scotts hand held spreader with a paper towel. Put the required amount of bait into the handheld spreader. Set the spreader on #2.

We will use a gridiron pattern (like the lines on a football field) for applying bait to lawns:

As in the above representation, each turn will be a 10-foot turn. Start at one edge of the lawn and use the following technique for applying Top Choice. Squeeze the spreader trigger, crank the handle, pacing yourself at 40 feet per 10 seconds. This application procedure will apply Top Choice to a 10-foot wide swath. Instruct the customer to irrigate with ¼ - ½ inches of water following the application.

PROACTIVE FOLLOW-UP

Return to inspect the entire yard after one week and spot treat activity if any exists. Continue proactive services until all activity is eliminated.

EXTRA SERVICE PROTOCOL

Occasionally the customer may find and report new fire ant mounds or activity. These can start due to a number of reasons such as excessive rain, disturbance of the treated area by man or by fallen tree limbs, etc. We will return as we do for any fire ant complaint call and will treat all mounds found in the area under guarantee with .5 oz of Advion Fire Ant Bait per mound. Do not apply bait to the lawn at this time. Be sure to apply bait immediately surrounding the mound but not directly onto the mound. Control should be expected within a week. Follow-up weekly until activity ceases.

Safety & Environmental Notes

Keep children and pets off the lawn until granules are watered in and the grass is dry.

Avoid applying near ponds, streams, or drainage areas.

Do not apply if heavy rain is expected within 24 hours.

Store unused products in a cool, dry place.

Other Pests

Top Choice may also provide limited (not for a year) control of fleas, ticks, mole crickets, other nuisance ants.

Refer to the GreenUp Protocols for granular spreader broadcast and spot treat protocols for additional information.

DOWNLOADS

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