

# Fire Ants in Hemp

► These little pests can cause big problems in hemp production. What can you do to protect your crop from these angry ants?

## Identification

- Dark red to brown in color.
- Narrow waist with two bumps.

#### The Life of a Fire Ant

- The four life stages are egg, larva, pupa, and adult.
- Most colonies have more than 200,000 workers.
  They live in mounds that are a maze of underground tunnels.
- Fire ants work together to protect their brood and queen.
- Fire ants are aggressive.
- If their mound is threatened, they will sting anything that is near the mound.

## **Damage**

- They form mounds at or near the plant base.
- The mites tunnel through stems and cut off nutrients to the plants.
- Plants may wilt and yellow or even die after fire ant damage.
- By the time plant damage is noticed, the ants have likely moved their mound to nearby plants.







## Management

To manage fire ants, you must **kill the queen**. There are two options for controlling fire ants: **baits** and **mound treatments**. Which is better?\*

## **Bait**

**How it works:** Foraging ants take the bait back to the mound. Other ants, including the queen, eat the bait.

- Pro: More effective control; more economical on a large scale.
- Con: Control may take several weeks.

## **Mound Treatments**

**How it works:** Applied directly to the mound and kills the ants.

- Pro: Faster than bait.
- Con: May fail to kill the gueen.

\*Use only pesticides that are approved for hemp by the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries. Find a complete list of these pesticides in the IPM section of the Alabama Extension website.





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