

## **Invasive Species Alert: Argentine Ant**

**Argentine ants are currently in Rocky Creek Park. Make sure you don't transport them out.** This species is a major nuisance invading beds and even refrigerators. Colonies consist of hundreds of queens and millions of workers that may cover hundreds of acres. Once this species is established, it is very difficult to control or eliminate. The ant "farms" harmful plant insects such as aphids making plants susceptible to disease and kills beneficial insects. This species competes with native insects for food and habitat and may displace other species. There are reports indicating decline in bird populations in areas of heavy infestation. The species has caused problems for agriculture in both poultry and orchard operations.

Argentine ants re-colonize by hitchhiking in potted plants, camping equipment, wheel wells, boats and many other places.

### **Precautions campers are taking:**

- Treat around supports, tires and anything touching the ground to prevent Argentine ants from entering equipment. Some campers have had success treating around supports and equipment with general repellant insecticides or products such as Comet and Ajax. Treating around hoses and electric cords with petroleum jelly may also deter ants from entering the trailer.**
- Conduct a thorough inspection of your equipment before leaving the park to ensure you don't take any with you.**
- Do not disturb bait stations located in the park.**



Bait Station



Photo Credit: Stanford University

Texas AgriLife Research & Extension Service is assisting the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in determining effective treatment methods to control Argentine ant. To report suspected spread of the species, you may e-mail [acalixto@tamu.edu](mailto:acalixto@tamu.edu)

It is important to remember invasive species are showing up at recreation areas across the United States and are being transported unknowingly by campers and boaters. Each person plays a vital role in stopping the spread of invasive species by becoming knowledgeable of invasive species and by taking steps to prevent transport and reporting suspected species when found.

### **Common means of unknowingly transporting invasive species include:**

- Bringing in infected firewood.**
- Transporting colonies that have loaded into recreational trailers, motorhomes, vehicles, boats, etc.**
- Transporting vegetation and animal life that has attached to boats and recreational equipment associated with water.**
- Transporting colonies nesting in potted plants.**