



Fire ants a target after wet weather — look, report, treat

South East Queenslanders are urged to stock up on fire ant bait to treat nests which become more visible after heavy rain.

The National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program Steering Committee Chair Dr Wendy Craik said residents and tenants living with fire ants could manage the pest in their own backyard, but people should still report nests to the program.

“Fire ants build their nests higher after rain and thrive in the humid conditions that often follow storms and weather events,” Dr Craik said.

“The water can collapse fire ant mounds, which prompts the super pest to pull more soil from the top of lawns and begin again.”

Landowners and tenants can treat the pest using fire ant bait purchased from a retailer or pest chemical supplier, or they can hire a licensed pest manager to carry it out on their behalf. A list of bait options and treatment directions are available at daf.qld.gov.au/fireants

Don't undertake fire ant treatment when the ground is very wet or rain is expected within six hours. Heavy disturbance of the area should also be avoided for up to seven days prior.

After treatment, it is important the area is not wet or mowed for up to two days. Excavation should also be avoided for one week.

Dr Craik said fire ants were known to spread following big rain events, such as the South East Queensland floods in 2011.

“They can survive flood waters by linking their bodies together to form rafts,” she said.

“The queen and the larvae are loaded on top of the raft with food and as the flood waters rise they float away.

“Wet weather events usually see an increase in fire ant reports and program staff are ready, but I'm reminding residents about their treatment options.

“We will always respond to high-risk situations, or if the landowner or tenant is unable to treat.”

The program's eradication and clearance effort is ongoing with more than 200,000 ha treated in the west, with remaining areas to be treated between now and 2027.

People are urged to check their yards for fire ants and report any sightings to the program within 24 hours at daf.qld.gov.au/fireants or by calling 13 25 23.



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