

or stinging. The effects on a human are dependent upon the number of attacking ants, and that person's degree of allergy. Ants may also spread such human diseases as dysentery, typhoid fever, or tuberculosis by feeding on and crawling over sputum, faeces, and carrion.

The importance of ants as pests cannot be overestimated. For instance, during one year the total amount of literature issued to the public on ants ranked sixth among U.S. Department of Agriculture publications. A former head of an entomology unit within the Department of Agriculture informed me that requests for information on ant identification and control ranked very high among the total received for a number of years. At a very early date, the U.S. Department of Agriculture recognized the importance of ants as pests, and issued publications on them (certainly as early as Marlatt, 1898). In the early publication referred to, three species were discussed: The Pharaoh ant *Monomorium pharaonis* (Linnaeus), the small black ant *Monomorium minimum* (Buckley), and the pavement ant *Tetramorium caespitum* (Linnaeus). They were briefly discussed as to recognition, biology, economic importance, and control. Since that date, the Department has periodically issued bulletins and circulars by various authors on house-infesting ants, as well as on those affecting ranges, orchards, forests, field crops, and agriculture in general. Many, if not most, of our States have issued similar publications, especially on house-infesting ants.

I am convinced from my nearly 50 years of experience with ants that few homes escape infestation over a long period of years, and that innumerable homes suffer almost constant or recurring infestations. The degree to which such homes suffer may vary from almost negligible to severe. An ant like the Pharaoh ant *Monomorium pharaonis* (Linnaeus), or the Argentine ant *Iridomyrmex humilis* (Mayr), may be an almost continuous pest over months or even years, whereas other species may infest a house on rare occasions and only for a limited time. Frequently, infestations of the latter kind will cease abruptly of their own accord without obliging the housekeeper to resort to control measures. House-infesting ants may be likened to common colds—everyone is subject to them, and while they may be very annoying, the damages suffered are usually of short duration and are seldom severe.

During the 25 years that have elapsed since I bought a new, mostly brick home, the structure, especially the kitchen, has been infested by seven species of ants: *Crematogaster cerasi* (Fitch), *Solenopsis molesta* (Say), *Monomorium minimum* (Buckley), *Tapinoma sessile* (Say), *Lasius alienus* (Foerster), *Tetramorium caespitum* (Linnaeus), and *Camponotus castaneus* (Latreille). The last-named species appeared only once in the house, fed on angel cake, and left of its own accord. All the other ants have infested the house at various intervals during warm weather over a long period of years. Occasionally two species have infested the kitchen at once, but the species were not in close contact with each other. *M. minimum* was found nesting in the soil near the foundation wall below the kitchen, and *S. molesta* in a rotten plank of a small porch adjoining the kitchen. *T. sessile* showed a fondness for sweets, whereas *S. molesta* and *M. minimum* fed on meats, grease, or crackers with much shortening. The most persistent