

HOUSE ANTS FACE A PHANTOM MENACE

The ants seemed unstoppable. Odorous house ants were turning last spring into a nightmare for Bernie Cox, vice president of operations for Fidelity Exterminating in Aberdeen, Md. No matter what he did, the ants kept coming back, like some kind of 1950s atomic age monster movie.

One residential account in particular was quickly becoming a significant problem for Cox. He had exhausted what he knew to be all of his resources. The most success he had up to this point had been temporarily suppressing the ants with gel baits and wettable powders. "But they'd always come back just as strong as before," Cox said. One particularly worrisome account concerned a homeowner who had been a customer for about a year. Now Cox and Fidelity were risking losing the account as well as facing the possibility of having to refund the homeowner's money for not getting the job done.

With four to six new customer calls coming in a day with the same odorous ant problem, Cox began to worry about building a roster of failed accounts. "It got to the point where I dreaded hearing the phone ring," Cox said. The ants were getting the better of him and with no effective solution in mind, Cox faced losing money on retreating accounts and also losing some accounts all together.

Enter the conquering hero.

Cox decided to try Phantom termiticide-insecticide by BASF. He'd seen Phantom mentioned in chat rooms online, as well as in magazine articles, and several peers in the industry had already sang its praises. But none of that could have prepared Cox for the results of his first application.

"I was thrilled and surprised," Cox said. Phantom knocked out the problem in one try and unlike the other treatments, Phantom had seemed to keep the ants away. According to Cox, Phantom had outperformed everything and he reports that he's seen extended control with Phantom that's lasted more than 90 days. This won back the trust of his customers, as well as his confidence in his own ability to face more odorous house ants.

"It made me look pretty good," Cox said of his experience with Phantom. Now it's his primary interior ant bait. And because odorous house ants are the primary pest for the accounts Fidelity serves, Phantom has become invaluable. He's also started to employ Phantom for cockroach treatments.

Cox relates that at first Phantom's price may appear to be a drawback, but if soft costs of retreating and callbacks are calculated, the cost of a job well-done justifies itself. "Every time I go to a home for free, I'm losing money."

Cox added that a strict label keeps Phantom from being a "do all" ant bait, but in those situations where the product is appropriate it has proven to be very effective. — *Will Nepper*

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Above: Bernie Cox, a pest management professional from Aberdeen, Md., treats a primary entry point with Phantom termiticide-insecticide.

Below: Cox explains to homeowner Margaret Palmer that storing wood indoors can create or add to an ant problem.



Bernie Cox explains how Phantom can help solve Palmer's indoor ant problem.