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ANTS ABOUT SHADE AND PARK TREES AND SHRUBS.

Ants are frequently found about shade and park trees and shrubs and their occurrence may be due to one of several conditions.

Many trees are infested by scale insects, aphids, or somewhat similar sucking insects that excrete a sweet sticky liquid. This fluid contains considerable sugar and is eagerly sought and fed upon by ants, so that in many instances the presence of these sucking insects is responsible for visits of the ants. Under this condition the annoyance of the ants may be eliminated by the control of the sucking insect present.

Sometimes the ants are attracted to fresh or sap-moist wounds or diseased areas. In such cases cleaning, treating, and coating the injured places will remove the source of attraction.

The most frequent cause of complaint, however, is the working and nesting of ants within the trunks and limbs of trees. This type of injury is very common, often following rapidly upon injuries and wounds when not properly treated. The damage caused by the ants' galleries and the decay which follows, accompanies, or precedes them is often very extensive and rapid, and trees badly weakened sometimes preserve the appearance of health and vigor when they are really dangerous, a menace to life, limb, and property.

When trees are badly infested by ants the strength of the injured parts must be the guide for determining whether to remove or preserve the trees. If it is found desirable to preserve a considerably weakened tree, filling the cavity and bracing can be resorted to for strengthening it. Always the infested and decayed areas should be removed, cutting down to sound wood and then cleaning and coating the cavity or cavities thickly with some waterproof preservative, such as a mixture of equal parts (by weight) of asphaltum and creosote, one-fourth creosote and three-fourths coal tar, or a good white-lead paint, although these materials must not be applied so as to permit their coming into contact with the freshly cut edges of the living bark, where a shellac should be used.

In some instances carbon disulphid, a poisonous volatile liquid that must be handled with care, kept away from fire and not inhaled, may be injected into the ant galleries, after which all the openings should be kept plugged tightly with some gas-proof material, such as grafting wax putty, or wet clay, for several days. This will kill the ants in the area fumigated, but the cleaning and treating of the cavity as described above will still be essential to the preservation of the tree.

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