

Use baits for sweet-loving ants

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Ant invasions begin in the spring and are most intense in May and June. If you have ants in your house, don't reach for that aerosol container. For many ant species, baits are the best management tactic because the entire colony is destroyed. This results in a more permanent solution to the ant problem. In addition, many baits have low toxicity to people and pets.

The trick to using baits successfully is to make sure that the offending ants find the bait, eat it voraciously and take it back to the nest to the queen and the rest of the colony. If residual insecticide sprays are used, the

foraging ants may die before they feed or take the bait back to the nest, counteracting the effectiveness of the bait. *Do not use insecticide sprays if you want to use bait for ant control.* If the bait is attractive to the ants, the entire colony will probably be destroyed within a few weeks.

Not all ant species can be controlled with baits and some baits work better than others. In general, ants that eat a wide variety of foods will be less affected by baits because the bait will comprise a smaller proportion of their food.

Sugar-loving ants are the easiest to control. In areas where you have seen sugar-loving ants,

place bait according to label directions. The best baits have boric acid or hydramethylnon as their active ingredient. Terro® and Pic II® liquid are two commercially available boric acid-based baits that can be purchased in many hardware or discount stores.

Although several common ant species in Nebraska can be controlled by sweet baits, others, like carpenter ants, are better controlled using other tactics. For a correct identification, bring several specimens to the Lancaster County Extension Office, 444 Cherrycreek Road, 8 - 4:30, Monday through Friday. (BPO)



Did you know?

? A World Wildlife Fund study says the world is running out of seafood because 70% of its major fishing grounds are being "strip mined" by too many boats that are so efficient that they now catch almost twice as many fish as can be sustainably harvested from the world's oceans.

? The earth's protective ozone layer will hit its all-time thinnest by 2000 or 2001, according to the World Meteorological Organization. A leading ozone expert says that the holes will stay for about 20 years and will recover to the 1960's levels by the middle of the next century.

? About half of the world's tropical forests are located in Indonesia, Peru, Brazil and the Congo which are indebted to the U.S. In 1998, President Clinton signed into law a bill which

allows the administration to enter into "debt-for-nature swaps" by reducing the debts that some foreign countries owe the U.S. in exchange for tan-



gible efforts by those countries, to preserve and restore tropical forests.

? According to the Organic Farming Research Foundation, approximately 1% of the U.S. food supply is grown using organic methods. Over the past

six years, annual sales of organic products have increased 20%, and in 1996, this represented over \$3.5 billion in retail sales.

? In 1998, President Clinton signed an executive order mandating that all paper bought by the federal government have at least 30% recycled fibers.

? Seven out of ten biologists believe that "we are in the midst of a mass extinction of living things and that this loss of species will pose a major threat to human existence in the next century," according to a nationwide survey by the American Museum of Natural History that interviewed 400 members of the American Institute of Biological Sciences.

Source: Center for Sustainable Agricultural Systems, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, UNL. (BPO)

What are rain forests?

Rain forests are tropical woodlands that grow in hot, humid areas of the earth, near the equator. These areas have an annual rainfall of at least 100 inches. Rain forests are important for several reasons. They clean and renew the earth's atmosphere by taking carbon dioxide from the air and putting oxygen into it. The forests affect the climate of the surrounding areas.

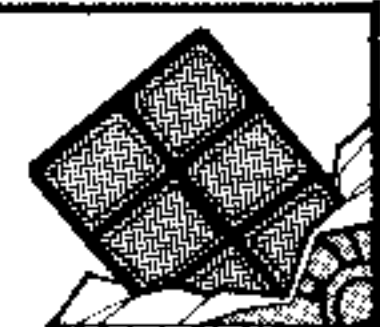
In countries around the world, rain forests are being destroyed, while animals and plants are being displaced. The wood is being used as building material or fuel. The land is for homes and factories, ranches and roads. Some of us do not understand that rain forests are essential to the health of the earth and that, once cut, it will take almost a life time for these forests to be regrown or renewed. (ALH)



The Amazon rain forests produce 40 percent of the world's oxygen.



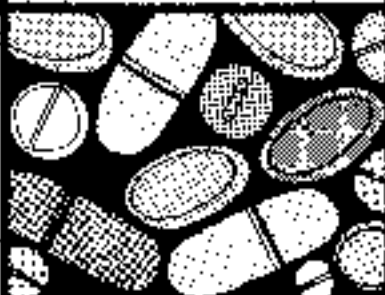
Rain forests are home to about one-half of all the plant and animal species on earth.



South American rain forests are the home of the wild cocoa plant, from which chocolate is made.



Rain forest plants are estimated to be the source of ingredients used in 25 percent of the drugs U.S. doctors prescribe.

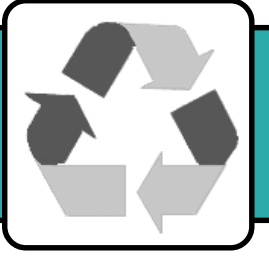


About 70 percent of the plants used to make drugs for cancer treatment are found only in rain forests.



Throughout the world, rain forests are being destroyed at the alarming rate of 115 square miles a day!

Environmental Focus



Dandelions: bad or good?

Dandelions bloom throughout the summer, but they are one of the earliest blooming weeds because they have a well established taproot.

If you want to rid your lawn of dandelions without using a herbicide, arm yourself with a long-handled weed fork or a weed popper and go after your dandelions with confidence. It's true that dandelions are painfully persistent. Their long taproots are hard to pull and small pieces left behind will regenerate into new weeds. But they're not invincible.

The key is to attack them when they're blooming because their root reserves are low. If you dig out four to five inches of the root, you have better than an 80% chance that the plant won't have enough strength to send up another shoot.

A weed popper pulls out the plants, roots and all, with a stomp. A long-handled weeding fork lets you do the job while standing.



At some point, you may decide that it is too hard to get rid of the dandelions, but you need some sort of mental justification why it is okay to let them take over your lawn. Did you know that dandelions are very important spring-blooming plants for honeybees? They collect large amounts of pollen that is an important protein source for their brood during this time of the year when the colony is growing rapidly. Dandelions are also a source of nectar that the bees use to make honey. However, dandelion honey isn't as tasty as the honey of some other plants; that is, to humans. I am sure that the bees find it delicious. (BPO)

Clean water: do you take it for granted?

A good water supply has been essential to the development of human civilizations throughout human history. Water supply tunnels found in the Middle East have been dated to 4000 B.C. Water filtration was used to purify water in Egypt and Iraq around 2000 B.C.

Evidence of waste disposal has been found in the ruins of ancient civilizations. Archaeologists have found evidence of sanitary sewers, hot and cold water faucets and even the first flush toilets in the ancient ruins (1700 B.C.) on the island of Crete.

Water was exceptionally important to the Romans who built 11 aqueducts (300 B.C. - 200 A.D.) carrying about 300 gallons for each citizen each day who enjoyed public baths and fountains. They constructed public latrines for regular folks, but the wealthiest Romans even had latrines inside their homes. Roman cities had regular systems of drains running under the streets carrying storm water and sewage.

With the fall of the Roman Empire and the onset of the Middle Ages, many of the advancements the Romans had made in water supply and sanitation were lost. Throughout the Middle Ages until the mid-1800's, people did not understand that recurring outbreaks of cholera and other water-borne diseases occurred from drinking contaminated water. It was not until the 19th century, that scientists began to understand the relationships between the water supply,

wastewater and disease.

Alexander Cumming received the first patent for a modern toilet in 1775. However, it was late 19th century before houses were built with modern bathrooms (i.e., running water and flush toilets). Some senior citizens who lived on farms in the 1920's-1940's may well remember homes without indoor toilets and running water.

I suspect that many of us take clean water for granted because it is always there at the turn of



a faucet. How good is your water? If you have your own well, this would be a good time to have it tested for coliform bacteria and nitrates.

In Lincoln, water testing is provided, for a fee by the Nebraska Department of Public Health Laboratory (402-471-8428) at 3701 South 14th Street. A commercially-operated, approved laboratory is E and I Laboratories, Inc. (402-470-2255), 3920 Northwest 39th Street. Contact these labs for instructions on taking a water sample. (BPO)

Answer: Of the earth's water, 97% is salty and 2% is locked in icecaps and glaciers. Only 1% is drinkable.

(BPO)