



**Revised Edition**

Note from Andy Lopez

Hi,

This version is the exact copy of my printed book with updates up to 2012. To get the latest information from me, I suggest that you join my Club and as a member, you will get all my latest versions of all my ebooks. This book for example has been expanded into a new book called “Don’t Panic It’s Organic” due out 2015/2016. It will be made available in printed and ebook form. Members will get it

free!

Thanks

andy Lopez

Invisible Gardener

Published by  
Invisible Gardener  
NATURAL  
PEST CONTROL  
Alternatives to Chemicals  
for the  
Home and Garden  
by  
Andrew Lopez  
The Invisible Gardener

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## FOREWARD

It is my pleasure to be able to introduce to you this manual of organic information for the home and garden, farmer and professional, written by an unusually well-informed and qualified person, Andrew Lopez, or as he is better known, "The Invisible Gardener". We all know by this time that our planet is in trouble, and that we are the ones who must do what is necessary to save her. Each one of us can work on our small piece of the world to set up a viable eco-balance system. Understanding the alternatives to chemicals is an important step in this process. It is necessary for us to realize that a change in the way we treat our own environment can make a big difference in the general eco picture. Chemical fertilizers and pest controls create enormous damage to the environment (pollution does begin at home) because they sterilize wherever applied (meaning they kill off all of the favorable bacteria necessary for a working eco-system), contaminate ground waters and kill fauna. Everything that we have learned to do with chemicals can be done with the organic system. The Invisible Gardener gives you all the information you need to do it, starting with the recipes (formulas), adding his unique methods, and giving you the sources of whatever you need.

The Organic system is not something to be used only in the vegetable garden, or to control ants, or to avoid toxic products. As expressed by The Invisible Gardener in this splendid book, it means total commitment to healing the good earth naturally. This often means proper fertilization and foliar feeding so that plants can protect themselves. It also means new concepts for tree management, flower propagation and even compost making, plus special remedies for problems inside the home and out.

The methodology is all there how to switch away from toxic technology, and how to avoid pollution of air, land and water. I especially like being able to use, say, Tabasco sauce to control pests eating my vegetables, or baking soda for my roses, or knowing how to use rock dust on my trees, roses, gardens, and lawns.

Andy's knowledge extends into the house, too. One of my favorite chapters is "Dances with Ants." He also saved me a great deal of money in helping me with carpenter ants (I thought they were termites!) and with brown recluse spiders, which drop in from time to time.

It's all so easy, safe and economical, too!

We know how to make our planet into a Garden of Eden. It is time we do it. Here is a tool. I recommend we all use it. Each one of us should have our own Green Acres.

Eddie Albert

## Intro Chief Seattle

Chief Seattle was not talking about the World Wide Web when he made the statement

below but meant instead “linked together”, like the spider’s web. Everything we do to the earth effects us all. We cannot escape it’s effects any more than we can escape from the chemicals that we are using on this planet!

“Man did not weave the web of life. He is merely a strand in it.

Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.”

Chief Seattle 1856

People want to be able to say, “I am helping the earth by not using any chemicals that pollute her.” Actions and words are not the same. People do far more damage to the earth than they realize!

For many years I have been saying, “Be careful of what you use and what goes into the earth”. Even if chemical companies say it’s safe and that it breaks down into harmless compounds, do not believe them! Scientists are finding that these harmless compounds do indeed get together with other so called harmless compounds to form much deadlier compounds, which not only harm humans but all wildlife they meet!

Researchers say substances that have little effect on sex hormones individually become much more potent when combined! The unexpected results mean safety standards are inadequate.

Does this sound familiar? Animals in the wild are being effected at a tremendous rate. Animals like the Florida alligator and Great lakes’ birds are being born with exceedingly high estrogen levels. These animals are being born sometimes with both male and female organs! They cannot mate and their line (species) will die!

This is due to chemicals that we use; from pesticides, to fertilizers, to everyday household items, to the medicine we use. All chemicals can have disastrous effects on wildlife and on humans as well! We must learn to control the use of these chemicals. We must learn to use organically safe chemicals that Mother Nature herself has tested for us. We must stop using chemicals that pollute ourselves, our children, our wildlife before it’s too late. So the next time you reach for that spray bottle of — — —, think about it. Do you have to use this? Is there another way?

This book is dedicated to the goal of helping you to choose the organic method over the chemical method.

It can be done 100% organically. It can be done and it does work! Please do not give in to the chemicals (did you know that beer has over 72 chemicals in it)?! Think of your children and the mess we are leaving them to handle. Think of the wildlife we are destroying by using these chemicals. Think about the ingredients of what you want to buy before you buy it! Ask yourself do I know what this stuff will do to the earth? If you do not have an answer, don't use it! If you do not buy it, they won't make it!

**By following the 5 R's...Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Replant, and Rethink; we will help the Earth to Heal herself and us!**

# Dances With Ants

## How to Control Ants Organically

### Ant Psychology

Ants are highly organized. Some ants live on household foods, sweets or protein, some eat only aphid honeydew, some eat seeds, grains or vegetable roots, some grow their own food such as fungi, and of course most ants eat other insects. Ants help to spread various types of bacterial diseases through their “farming” practices of herding aphids from one part of the plant to another. Ants will occasionally charge into a group of aphids. To the ants, these aphids are a great prize. The ants will stroke the aphids with their antennae until the aphids secrete a drop of a sweet liquid known as honeydew; this the ants store in their second stomachs. They do this until the second stomach is full; only then will the ant ingest the honeydew for itself, into its first stomach. The ant takes the honeydew back to the nest where it is delivered first to the nursery to feed.

Ants are survivors. They recover very quickly from any disaster, especially those of man’s making. They have actually adapted to benefit from mankind. They have even learned how to train us. They know how we will react to any given situation and know what buttons to push. They have adopted us as they have adopted the aphids! They remember events and places for several months. Just leave a piece of food or some sweets to be found by them and they will have your place mapped and marked with special paths that lead right to it. It is for this reason that you will not be able to eliminate ants entirely from your environment, and that you would be wise not to do battle with them, but to communicate with them and to the ant babies, and then to any other needy ants in the nest. The nectar is, unfortunately, not cleaned up

“ The more stressed out your soil is the very well after a meal, and the leftover nectar becomes greater your ant infestation will be .” food for many different types of bacteria and viruses. It also attracts many other insects such as whiteflies, ants, aphids, and other things scales, mites, and so on.

Ants have very advanced societies, complex and Ants have relationships with many different creatures in the garden. They are involved in everything that happens in the garden.



## **The No-Pollution Solution to natural ant control**

If you employed one of the ubiquitous services that claims to solve ant problems with chemicals, every few months someone would come by and spray your property, put up the now famous “Do not walk on the grass for 48 hours” sign, and that would be that.

There are many problems that arise from employing this method of pest control. It pollutes the land, groundwater, and produce. Numerous health hazards arise that result from exposure to these chemicals. And, most importantly, this method only increases the ants’ resistance. Ants quickly develop an immunity to all chemicals, thus requiring stronger chemicals the next time around.

The solution to these problems is straightforward: Stop using chemicals and use a different approach. Viable alternatives exist to chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides that kill organisms within the soil, thereby upsetting its natural balance.

**There are two ways to sterilize the soil: by using heat and by using chemicals.**

When used in the soil, chemicals completely sterilize it, killing off the beneficial organisms (called simply “beneficials”) that live in it. With the beneficials unable to reestablish themselves, predators gain the upper hand. Predators will always establish themselves first! Chemicals destroy the balance; when this natural balance is upset, the natural systems break down, causing infestations of pests or disease to occur.

### **Nature’s Gardeners**

Ants play a very important role in the plant kingdom. They are not pests, but in fact nature’s gardeners. When kept within their boundaries, they perform many functions which are important not only to the plant kingdom, but by extension, to all living things. Ants reveal to us the importance of nature’s balance. They serve as indicators that tell us when there is balance and when there is not. It is unnatural and impossible to eliminate ants from the face of the earth. Remove them and a great deal of damage will occur. The answer lies in learning to control

them. To keep ants off your roses, out of the house, and off the fruit trees, you will have to understand the various relationships that ants have with various plants, animals, and humankind. Timing is important. Ants help pollinate fruit trees and flowers. Thus, they must be allowed on the plants during this time for proper pollination, but not at other times, such as when the fruit trees are bearing. It is during this time that you use barriers to keep them off.

Remember—One of the best ways to deal with the ant problem is to realize that a healthy soil leads to properly fed and healthy plants that are less attractive to ants, other insects, and diseases than plants that are sick, weak and under stress due to improper feeding and watering.

Providing your plants 100 percent organic natural fertilizers is a very important step in reducing plant stress. Using compost and natural fertilizers helps keep the soil alive. It is this life that provides plants with the nutrition they need to keep insects at bay. The greater the nutritional levels, the lower the stress levels. Another way to improve plants' health is to use liquid seaweed to spray the leaves. It is best to blend different types of liquid seaweed to obtain a complete collection of all the trace minerals needed for healthy plant growth. Water your plants regularly. Set up a watering schedule where conservation is required and stick to the schedule. If you are able to, use drip systems.

## **Mulching**

Mulching is very important as ants love dry, infertile soil. The importance of compost cannot be overstated. Compost properly made will provide an important source of nutrients and bacteria, needed by the plants for proper growth. (See the compost chapter for more info.)

Mulching helps the soil retain moisture longer allowing for more biodiversity in the soil to occur.

Ants know when plants are stressed, and act accordingly. They have been around much longer than we have. The land your house is on was inhabited by ants long before it was inhabited by you. The earth is their home as well as ours. Don't try to fool them, you'll only fooling yourself. Don't be in a hurry—these things will take time.

The important thing to remember is that it will take time to control ants. It will be time well spent and the results will last forever.

**“Ants are involved in more than 70 percent of the pest problems associated with both the home and garden.”**

**“As a thinker and planner the ant is the equal of any savage race”  
-Mark Twain**

**“The key to dealing with ants successfully is a balanced environment. Nature plays by certain rules. Respect these rules and they will respect you.”  
Andy Lopez Invisible Gardener**

# Steps to Controlling Ants

## STEP 1....RECON AND SHOPPING LIST

### Recon

The very first step in controlling ants around your home is for you to take a walk around and see if you're really cleaning up after yourself as well as you can. Ants are very smart - they know a good thing when they see it. If you are providing food and water for them then they certainly will know it and come around looking for it.

Don't leave out food overnight; always dispose of garbage properly. Usually the areas where the ants are seen in the house are near sources of either food or water or both. Do not provide a water source for them. Leaky water systems, such as hose connections, are a ready source of water and an ant colony will often be set up near them.

Are your children helping? What do you do with your pet food? Another important aspect of Step 1 is to locate any ants that are coming into your house and find out how they are coming in. Follow them around and see if they are entering through holes or cracks in the wall.

Let's go over what you should have done by now:

- clean up
- control sources of water
- observe how they enter and exit house
- observe what types) of food they are going after
- observe trails and their source around the outside of the house
- walk around your property and try to locate current ant colonies

## The Shopping List

- Dr. Bronners Peppermint Soap or any natural soap you have will do. You can get this soap at any health food store or food co-op. Dr.. Bronners also makes Almond Oil Soap and several others. I would pick up one of each; rotating them produces the best results. You can also use any natural citrus oil based soap if you prefer.
- 4 finch bird nesting houses (at your local pet store). Or, buy any pre made ant control units like the one from Innovative Pest Control Products or others I mention below or look on the internet.
- 8 oz. honey or white sugar or corn syrup
- 8 oz. plastic cups—one for each bird house
- a quart sprayer (or gallon sprayer)
- a caulking gun and caulk (or chewing gum)
- boric acid
- You can also buy pre-made ant control gels and ant bait stations such as these which I have tried and approve of:
  1. Terro [www.terro.com](http://www.terro.com)
  2. Innovative Products [www.antcafe.com](http://www.antcafe.com)
  4. Ant Fix 5.8% [www.antfix.com](http://www.antfix.com)
  5. Ants No more 4.5% [www.kness.com](http://www.kness.com)
  6. Drax [www.drax.com](http://www.drax.com)

## **STEP 2.....ON THE ANT TRAIL**

Caulking gun and caulk:

Once you have sprayed the soap then you caulk up all entrances and exits that the ants were using. Any type of material can be used to close these entrances. I sometimes use chewing gum! Elmers glue is OK to use if you don't mind the smell.

Any type of natural compound can be used.

Spraying Inside House:

Citrus based cleaners are good as long as it does not contain any petroleum distillates, solvents and nothing caustic. I found one called Orange TKO [www.tkoorange.com](http://www.tkoorange.com) and it is 100% organic. It has a pleasant citrus smell but if you are sensitive to odors then you should take a light sniff before you buy it. This stuff will dissolve most insect bodies it comes into contact with yet it is safe to use in the home and garden. Use ••• tablespoon per quart water. Any Herbal liquid soaps such as Green Ban Dog Shampoo or any other natural dog shampoo, with its many different Herb's, can also be used. You only have to add 1 tablespoon of the Green Ban per quart of water. For Outside: Jungle Rain's or any natural soap/citrus soap based product which has citrus oils and peppermint soap.

“If you can control the ants, you will have a greater chance of controlling your general insect problems and plant diseases, provided you maintain a healthy, balanced environment. Spraying a chemical pesticide, even one that rids you of your ant population for a few weeks or even months, does not solve your ant problem.”

**“Ants build what could be described as underground condominiums, and use “highways” to get from one place to another.”**

**Andy Lopez Invisible Gardener**

## **STEP 3.....THE ANT CAFE**

### The Ant Control Bait Center

The Ant Control Bait center is a simple finch bird box or a concrete block, with a secured lid ( or use Innovative Pest Control Ant Cafe or any of the ready made ant bait stations on the market which I have mentioned a few already). It has a small hole in the front through which the ants enter. This hole must be small enough only for ants; 1/8 inch is enough. The box can be bought already made for baby birds to feed from; it's called a finch box. It costs about \$5 and is available at any pet shop. It's worth the cost. It will last you several years. Inside the ant cafe goes an eight-ounce plastic cup to hold the ant gels 1% or 5% dilution. Use the wood screws to make sure that the box lid is secured so that small children and animals won't be able to get at the ant food.

Put your sugar source (honey, white sugar, or corn syrup) and water into the Ant Cafe cup (start with liquid ant control gel 5% dilution below), screw the box lid down, place where ants are seen and where the Ant Cafe can be secured down. This will usually be at four locations along the outside of the house. Cover the cafe with large rocks so only the ants can get at it. Keep it out of direct sunlight as the sugar water will ferment. The ants will enjoy this free meal and will consider it a food haven. Do this for the first two weeks or so, keeping the Ant Cafe cup filled with some kind of sugar water. It is important to establish the cafe as a food source. This alone may solve the problem and you won't have to use a poison (boric acid) to kill them.

Gradually, over a period of weeks, move the cafes away from the house. You will notice that the ants have stopped going into your house and are going into the Ant Cafe. At this point, you can change the mixture to a 1% maintenance dilution.

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