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Fire Ants: We Need a Large Scale Treatment Program And the Alliance will be Lobbying for this in Tallahassee

There is a growing public concern over the proliferation of fire ants. Some may remember in the 1990s and the early 2000s, there were huge dirt piles everywhere and when disturbed, hundreds of ants emerged to bite, sting, and inject venom. A pustule on the skin, surrounded by redness, would appear the following day. One nursing home death was attributed to a patient bitten and stung more than 1500 times. The prolific fire ant was introduced from Brazil into the United States in the early 1900s and, like many non-native species, became invasive and harmful to humans and wildlife.

Two species of fire ants are found in Florida. The red imported fire ant (RIFA), followed by the less common tropical or native fire ant.

Over the past few years, fire ant piles decreased, most likely due to a successful biological control treatment that begun in 1997 when parasitoid flies were introduced from South America. These flies decapitate worker ants in the final stages of development. Palm Beach County appeared to have a reprieve for a while, but the colonies are rising again. Research is being conducted on other natural enemies such as a protozoa and a fungus, but apparently the federal government and Florida government are not currently planning or funding any large-scale fire ant treatment programs.

Mound drenches, injections, surface dusting and baits are used to eliminate colonies. Home remedies such as pouring boiling water or igniting flammable liquids over the mounds are utilized as well, but can be dangerous to humans and the environment. These insects can also invade the home and are attracted to dirty laundry.

Communities can organize an effective fire ant suppression program with the help of experts, including County Extension Agents and Master Gardeners. For more information, contact the University of Florida at <https://ifas.ufl.edu/>

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Wellness Screening Expo is Huge Success

The Alliance of Delray and Delray Medical Center partner each year to bring to the residents of Delray Beach complimentary screenings including blood pressure, body mass index, bone density, and heart health. Flu, shingles, pneumonia, and tetanus shots are also provided and there is an abundance of health information and literature. Delray Medical Physicians also participate and attendees can ask the specialists questions. Operation Pill Drop is provided by the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office as well. This year was a huge success. See some photos below from this year's event. Photos are by Paul Finkelstein, Alliance Director.



Upper photo from left: Alliance VP Arnie Katz ; President Bob Schulbaum; President's Assistant Rose DeSanto; Executive VP Lori Vinikoor; VP Norma Arnold; Director Phyllis Levine. Lower photo from left: Alliance VP Norma Arnold; Former VP Stan Goodman; Director Susie Zuckerman.



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