Texas Agricultural Extension Service
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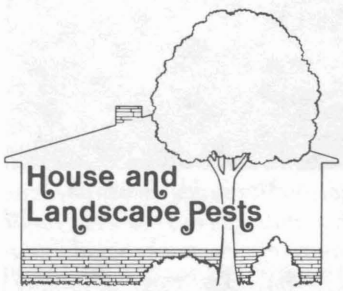


METHYL BROMIDE FUMIGATION FOR CONTROLLING THE TEXAS LEAFCUTTING ANT

J. W. Stewart and James Robinson*

The Texas leafcutting ant, *Atta texana*, is an important insect pest in South and East Texas. Effective baits are no longer available and the only means of eliminating a colony is by fumigation. Carbon bisulfide (Highlife) may be used on colonies near trees, buildings and in some urban areas where methyl bromide should not be utilized. One pint of carbon bisulfide poured into an active feeder hole above the ant colony will usually provide adequate control of the entire colony.

Methyl bromide (BROM-O-GAS®) may also be used for fumigating colonies of the Texas leafcutting ant; however, certain precautions should be followed. When using methyl bromide, one is advised to: 1) not fumigate colonies near the base of valuable trees and shrubs since the plant may be killed, 2) not use in or near human dwellings, and 3) work with a companion during the fumigation process.

A pictorial outline showing procedures for fumigation with methyl bromide follows. For additional information on the Texas leafcutting ant, refer to Extension publication L-1222 *Texas Leafcutting Ant*.

Safety First

Before using any chemical, **READ THE LABEL** and follow all instructions and safety precautions. Avoid chemical contact with skin. Wash exposed areas with generous amounts of soap and water.

Store chemicals away from human dwellings in locked cabinets and out of reach of children and pets.

Policy Statement For Making Chemical Control Suggestions

Suggestions for use of pesticides made by the Texas Agricultural Extension Service and the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station are based upon:

- Product effectiveness.
- Avoidance of residues in excess of allowable tolerances.
- Avoidance of toxicity to desirable vegetation, animals and humans.
- Avoidance of adverse side effects upon beneficial predators, parasites, honeybees, fish and other wildlife, plants, animals and humans.

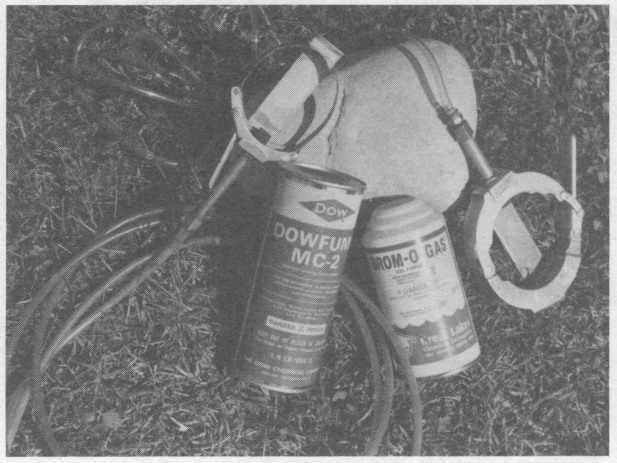
Suggested pesticides must be registered and labeled for use by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Texas Department of Agriculture. The status of pesticide label clearances is subject to change and may have changed since this publication was printed. County Extension agents and appropriate specialists are advised of changes as they occur.

The USER always is responsible for the effects of pesticide residues on his livestock and crops, as well as problems that could arise from drift or movement of the pesticide from his property to that of others. Always read and follow carefully the instructions on the container label.

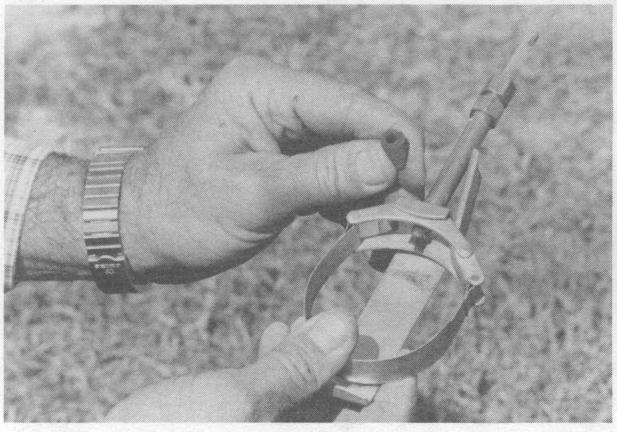
Proper disposal of waste pesticides and "empty" or used containers is an essential step in the safe use of pesticides. For additional information see L-1008 *Disposal—Pesticide and Pesticide Containers*.

*Extension entomologists, The Texas A&M University System.

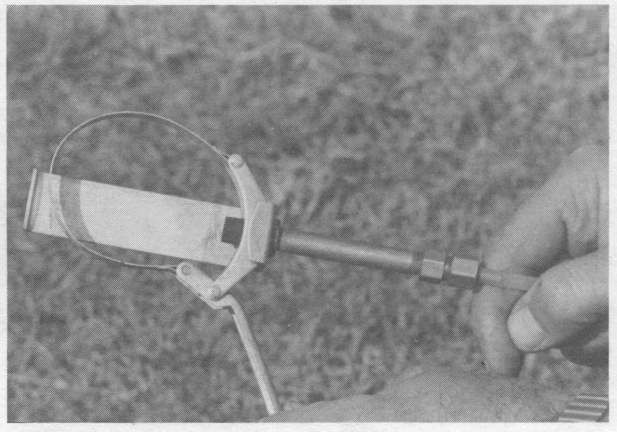
1. Locate center of colony. This area will be marked by numerous soil mounds that resemble small volcanoes.



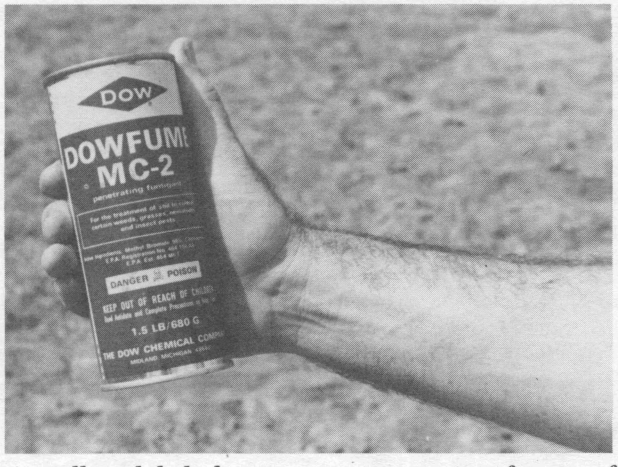
2. Material for fumigation includes a stone, applicator and methyl bromide gas in 1- to 1½-pound cans. Fumigation is more effective when soil moisture is high.



3. Inspect rubber tip to insure the rubber is in good condition. If needed, replace with a piece of gasline hose available from an auto parts store.



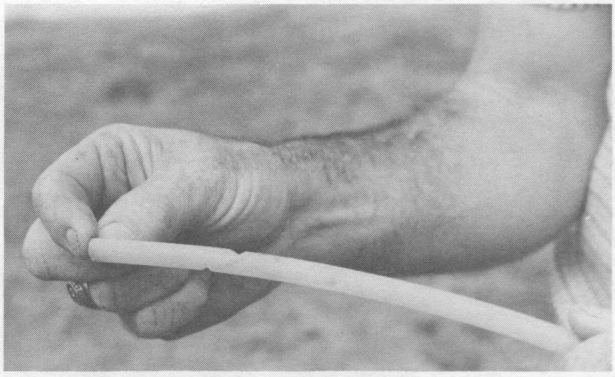
4. Applicator works as an over-center lock that decreases size of the circle and allows the metal tubing to penetrate the can.



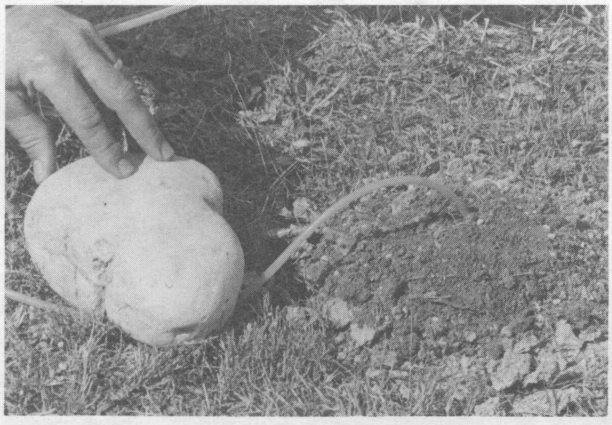
5. Follow label directions concerning safe use of methyl bromide.

6. Insert plastic tubing as deeply as possible into ant feeder hole.

7. *Tube may become plugged if forced into the soil. This should be avoided.*



8. *Notches may be cut in the side of tubing (approximately 1-1½" from end) to allow gas to escape into hole should tubing become plugged with soil.*

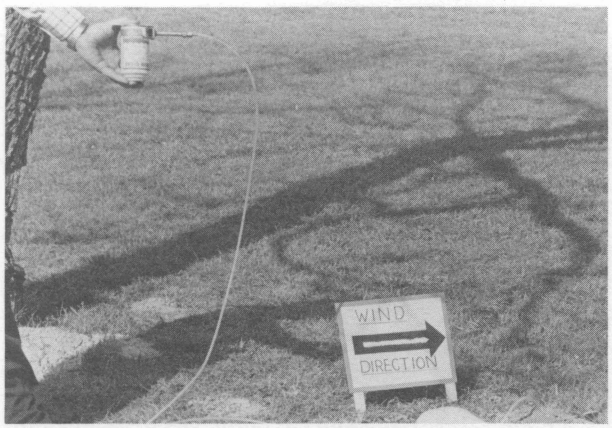


9. *Mound soil around hose and lay a stone on the tubing. Methyl bromide gas flows under pressure; the stone prevents the tubing from whipping out of the entry hole.*

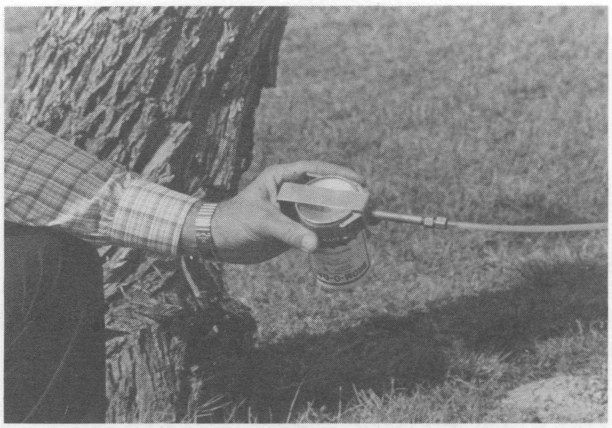
10. *Hold the container of gas upside down and place the applicator on the bottom of the can.*

11. *Invert can and insert fully into the applicator.*

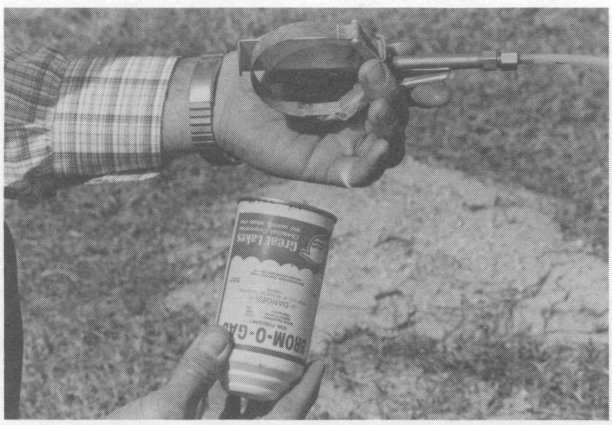
12. *Hold the can upside down with the nozzle tip or outlet pipe directed away from the body, as indicated by the arrow. Carefully pull the lever backward, allowing the metal tubing to penetrate the can.*



13. *Stand upwind at all times while fumigating. It is advisable to have a helper in case of an accident.*



14. *Allow the can to remain upside down during the first stages of fumigation. As the can empties, carefully tip the can to one side to allow gas to escape. As the contents empty,* ***hold the can right side up with the applicator on the bottom, allowing the full contents of the can to empty into the ant entry hole.***



15. *Once can is empty, pull latch forward. This allows the can to fall from the applicator.*

16. *Arrow indicates puncture hole where gas escaped. Dispose of can away from human dwellings.*

Acknowledgement

Appreciation is expressed to Herbert Brevard (Overton) and Ralph Ward (Uvalde) for their assistance in photographing scenes for this publication.

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