

Beat: Lifestyle

## It's Okay When You Find Ants on Your Peony Buds

**There is no need to kill them**

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**USPA NEWS** - I am not new to having Peonies in my garden, but for the first time, I noticed ants all over the buds. My first reaction was to research how to get rid of them. What I found was that it is okay just to leave them alone. The ants are not there to ruin them.

Ants like peonies for the same reason humans do, they're sweet. As the flower buds form, you'll notice sugary nectar droplets around the green outer part of the flower, called the sepal. As we all know, ants love sugar, so it's understandable that they are attracted to this sticky nectar. This common occurrence has led to the myth that peonies need ants in order to bloom. The theory goes that the buds need the ants to remove the sticky substance to allow them to open, but this folklore is completely untrue. Peonies will open with or without the help of a few ants.

The type of relationship between peonies and ants in the plant kingdom is described as mutualism, where both parties derive mutual benefit from the relationship. The peonies provide a food source of sugars, amino acids, and other compounds the ants need. In return, the ants protect the plant from other pests that may actually cause damage. Once the ants discover the nectar, they set a trail back to their nest for other ants in the colony to follow. All the ants in the colony protect this trail from potential invaders until all the nectar is gone, keeping other harmful bugs off the plant.

The presence of ants on peonies is only temporary. When they've removed all the nectar or when the plant stops blooming, they will trot off to find another source of food. As they are not harmful and remain on the flowers for a short amount of time, insecticidal is not necessary. It will also hurt the mutual relationship between these two, one of the great wonders of nature.

Thank you for reading my article. These are merely my thoughts and insights based on the facts. I use only verified sources. No fake news here. I write about a variety of subjects, mainly things I want to research and know more about. You can check out my website – Small Village Life at [smallvillagelife.com](http://smallvillagelife.com), where I share useful articles and news.

Wendy writes for the United States Press Agency and is a former columnist with the Fulton County Expositor, Wauseon, Ohio.

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