

Ghost Ants

(*Tapinoma melanocephalum*)



Origin / Description

Of Asian or African origin, ghost ants are tiny at just 1.5 to 2 mm long, sometimes difficult to see. Dark head, pale almost translucent abdomen and legs (hence "ghost"). Also known as black-headed ant.

Environment

Overseas, ghost ants are a serious household nuisance. They live in large colonies and forage in kitchens and bathrooms on sinks, benches, and floors seeking sweet foods and protein. Nest in outdoor flowerpots, under loose bark, or in small indoor spaces such as cracks, spaces between books, or wall cavities.

Behaviour

Ghost ants run in quick, erratic movements when disturbed. Workers may emit an acrid, coconut-like odour when crushed.

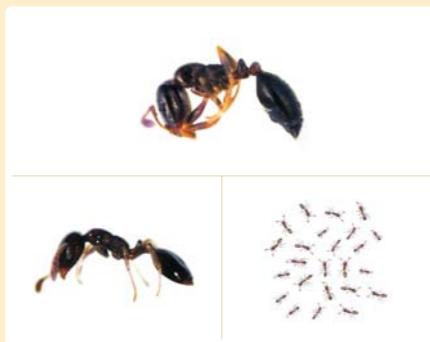
Sting

No sting and do not pose a significant human health risk.

If you see ghost ants call Biosecurity New Zealand on **0800 80 99 66**.

Monomorium sydneyense

(No common name)



Origin/Description

Endemic to Australia. A tiny ant just 1 to 2mm long. Dark brown.

Environment

Seed harvesting omnivore. May feed on native plant seeds in New Zealand. The species is primarily terrestrial but will forage on trees and on vertical surfaces. In Australia, they make small to medium-sized colonies and nest mostly in sandy soil and forage only a few metres.

Behaviour

Very little is known on the behaviour of these ants. They can occur indoors in tropical situations and in built up areas in Australia.

Sting

They have no sting and do not pose a significant human health risk.

If you see *Monomorium sydneyense* call Biosecurity New Zealand on **0800 80 99 66**.

Roger's Ant

(*Hypoponera punctatissima*)



Origin/Description

Roger's ant is present throughout Malaysia, Pacific, Europe, North and South America, Africa and the Middle East. The ant is also present on the Kermadec Islands, which lie 1000km NE of NZ. They have recently been found in Dunedin. Roger's ant is a tiny pest; winged females are 3.5mm in length and workers are 2 to 3 mm. Male ants are wingless and remain in the nest but will come out to forage for food. Swarms of winged females could be confused with midges.

Environment

In New Zealand they are likely to establish only in areas of human habitation and are attracted to warm buildings, especially those with a continuous source of heat such as factories, commercial kitchens, laundries and similar buildings.

Behaviour

Winged females can swarm in large numbers, while the worker ants, which are mainly nocturnal, are seldom seen as they are secretive and do not form trails. Roger's ant require very high temperature requirements and nests can only establish in well heated buildings. These ants are not attracted to food as they are predacious and feed on the larvae of little flies which are found around drains and leaking pipes.

Sting

Roger's ant is capable of stinging, although generally they do not pose a significant human health risk, especially in temperate climates. Those stung suffer a reddened, itchy lump that may last for several days. This can be relieved by applying a cold compress (e.g. ice in a cloth, plastic bag or plastic wrap) on the site for 15 to 20 minutes.

If you see Roger's ant call Biosecurity New Zealand on **0800 80 99 66**.



If you see any of these ants please contact Biosecurity New Zealand on **0800 80 99 66**.

For more information visit:

www.biosecurity.govt.nz



INVASIVE ANTS

How YOU can Protect
New Zealand from Exotic
Invasive Ant Species





National Invasive Ants Programme

How YOU can protect New Zealand from exotic invasive ant species.

Biosecurity New Zealand has run an invasive ant programme since March 2001. It includes surveillance of high-risk areas such as ports, container yards and some nurseries this is backed up by a response capability.

The programme has already detected and controlled a number of exotic ant species.

Invasive ants can compete with and prey upon New Zealand's native ant species. Some ants also pose a risk to crops, plants and public health. Others can be a nuisance in the home. These ants can also impact on our native insect, bird, reptile and other native fauna populations, in turn upsetting the natural ecology of the environment.

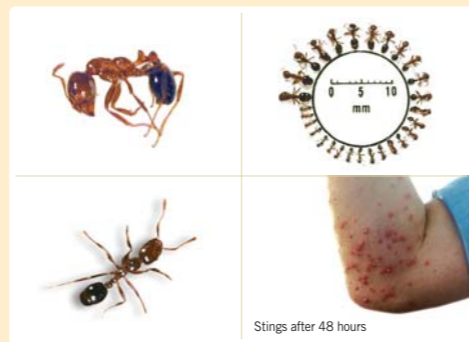
Early detection is the key to the eradication and control of invasive ants. This brochure outlines how to recognise, identify and report known invasive ant species.

Often it can be very difficult to tell an exotic ant by what it looks like. Ant behaviour provides a more reliable indicator, for example, ants which nest in mounds, erratic walking, aggressive swarming, biting or stinging.

The introduction of exotic ants into the country can be as simple as hitchhiking a ride on luggage, cargo or vessels coming into New Zealand. We all have a responsibility to protect New Zealand from unwanted pests and diseases, so if you see any of these ants, please contact Biosecurity New Zealand on 0800 80 99 66.

Red Imported Fire Ants

(*Solenopsis invicta*)



Origin/Description

Red imported fire ants are native to South America. They are reddish-brown in colour, although some have a shiny, opaque black abdomen. Size varies from 3 to 6mm in length. An ant longer than 6mm will not be a red imported fire ant.

Environment

Red imported fire ants build mounded nests of fine granular soil of variable size and height (up to 40cm). Depending upon colony age, some mounds may not be obvious. They build in sunny, open areas, for example, lawns, open pastures and fields, and sometimes against a wall, post or shrub. They also build in electrical boxes and on walls of buildings.

Behaviour

Red imported fire ants will aggressively defend their nest, swarming out and over the mound to repeatedly sting anything that appears a threat.

Sting

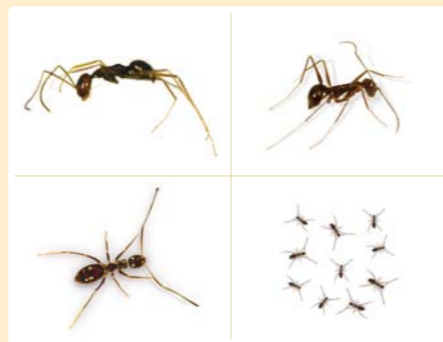
Fierce bee or wasp like sting. Symptoms include intense burning or itching. A blister forms at the sting site within five hours. A distinctive white pustule develops within a few days.

The stings although uncomfortable are not dangerous to most people. However, the pustules can become infected if scratched and on very rare occasions people may have a more serious reaction. People who show symptoms of a fire ant sting should seek medical advice. Infected stings are treated using antibiotics. If you believe you are having a serious allergic reaction it is important to seek medical help immediately.

If you see red imported fire ants call Biosecurity New Zealand on **0800 80 99 66**.

Crazy Ants

(*Paratrechina longicornis*)



Origin / Description

Of Asian or African origin, crazy ants are black and range in size from 2.5 to 3mm. They have a thinner body, longer legs and antennae than most ants. Distinctive by their erratic, rapid movements they do not always follow distinctive trails as other ants do.

Environment

Crazy ants nest in warm (dry or moist) places such as inside building walls, beneath carpets, in and around rubbish bins, heating pipes, tree or wood cavities or under debris.

Behaviour

If disturbed, the ants move in an erratic manner, weaving around very rapidly (hence the name crazy).

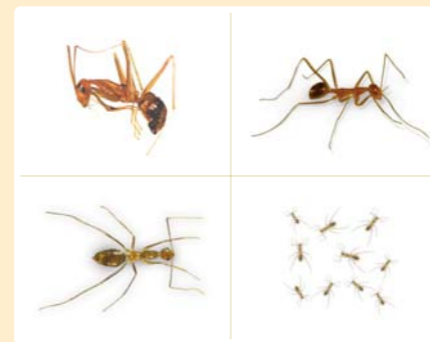
Sting

No sting but may bite if provoked. Crazy ants do not pose a significant human health risk, although they can be a serious household nuisance.

If you see crazy ants call Biosecurity New Zealand on **0800 80 99 66**.

Yellow Crazy Ants

(*Anoplolepis gracilipes*)



Origin/Description

Of Indian, Asian or African origin, the yellow crazy ant is a pale yellow colour with unusually long legs and antennae. Body length is 4 to 5mm long.

Environment

A major environmental and agricultural pest overseas, they can form multi-queened super-colonies in which ants occur at very high densities resulting in the destruction of trees and some crops. Generally they nest at the base of trees and plants, but they can occupy households.

Behaviour

The yellow crazy ant walks in a rapid and seemingly erratic manner, especially when disturbed. They are capable of mass attacking and killing larger animals (e.g. have caused massive reductions of red land crab populations in areas of Australia's Christmas Island).

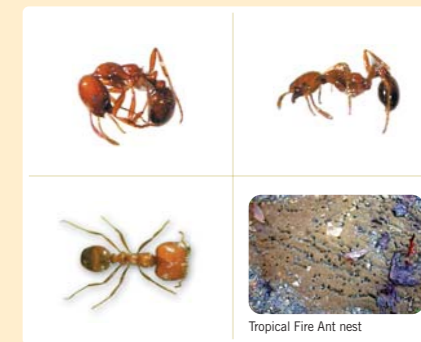
Sting

Yellow crazy ants don't sting but do spray formic acid to blind and subdue their non-human prey. Humans may suffer attacks from swarming yellow crazy ants, usually on the extremities, particularly feet and legs. The formic acid can cause localised irritation and burning. Such irritation or burning can be managed by washing the area with soap and water, and consulting a doctor should the pain not settle. Although unlikely to cause serious harm, if some formic acid is sprayed into your eyes, it could produce irritation and possibly pain. If this occurs the eye should be immediately irrigated with water for 15 minutes, and examined by a doctor if irritation or pain continues, or if vision is reduced.

If you see yellow crazy ants call Biosecurity New Zealand on **0800 809 966**.

Tropical Fire Ants

(*Solenopsis geminata*)



Origin/Description

Native of USA and South America. Orange brown body, 3 to 6mm long. Very similar in appearance to red imported fire ants.

Environment

Tropical fire ants are most prevalent in open, sunny areas, including barren land and grassland. They can also occur in partially shaded areas and build nests in mounds of fine soil around clumps of vegetation or under objects. Mounds may not always be obvious. They may also nest around household heat sources such as pipes or fireplaces. Overseas, tropical fire ants present a major conservation threat as they invade native communities affecting many of the animals and plants in that community.

Behaviour

If a colony is disturbed, numerous tropical fire ants swarm out to defend the nest and sting anything nearby.

Sting

The tropical fire ant takes its name from the fiery pain caused by their sting which may cause intense burning and itching. Simple first aid measures include elevating the affected extremity, and applying ice or a cool compress for 15 to 20 minutes. Oral antihistamines may help reduce itching. People previously stung by these ants may develop an allergic reaction. If you are stung by ants and develop a red, itchy rash, feel faint or experience difficulty breathing, seek medical attention immediately.

If you see tropical fire ants call Biosecurity New Zealand on **0800 80 99 66**.