

Factsheet

July 2018



White footed house ants
(*Technomyrmex jocosus*) with brood
(top) and with food (bottom)

White footed house ants (*Technomyrmex* spp.)

Ants to watch out for

Red imported fire ants, yellow crazy ants, electric ants and carpenter ants, all pose a serious social, economic and environmental threat to Western Australia. If you suspect you have these ants or any ants you haven't seen before, please contact us on freecall 1800 084 881.

Summary

White footed house ants (*Technomyrmex jocosus* or *T. albipes*) are a major widespread pest ant species. Their exact origin is not known, however *T. jocosus* is thought to be native and *T. albipes* exotic. These ants do not bite or sting.

Where are they found?

These ants can be seen in the home, sometimes in high numbers foraging in kitchens and bathrooms. They are more active at night and prefer sweet liquids and foods.

Damage

These ants rarely cause direct damage but are considered household pests as they are one of the few ant species that will nest inside. They can be found nesting in areas such as roof and wall spaces, electrical equipment, rolled up awnings, pot plants, and in-between flat packed items. They may also infest electrical items such as kettles, microwave ovens or clock radios.

Treatment

Control of these ants when numbers are low is advisable. When numbers are high and multiple nests have been established, control can be increasingly difficult. If nests are exposed they can be sprayed with fly spray, otherwise

Contact

Pest and Disease Information Service
(PaDIS)

Call: (08) 9368 3080

Email: padis@dpird.wa.gov.au



Black carpenter ant (*Camponotus pennsylvanicus*) (photo: PaDIL), red imported fire ant, electric ant (photo: PaDIL), yellow crazy ant (photo: PaDIL)

baits containing borates (borax) are effective for this sweet-feeding ant species. There are also gel baits now available containing the active ingredients thiamethoxam or indoxacarb that are effective and can be sourced online. Evaporation of baits can be minimised by placing in a sealed container and drilling a few holes above the bait level to allow access by ants. Once ants begin feeding, do not disturb bait. Products are available from garden centres, supermarkets and hardware stores.

Exotic threats

The following ants could impact on our outdoor lifestyle and Western Australia's agricultural and food industries.

Carpenter ants: Elsewhere in the world there are *Camponotus* species that are pests of timber and like termites, if left unchecked can cause extensive damage to structural timber and furniture.

Red imported fire ants (*Solenopsis invicta*): One of the most serious ant pests in the world. These ants are aggressive, particularly near the nest and inflict a painful sting. They are present in south east Queensland and they could accidentally be imported into Western Australia.

Electric ants (*Wasmannia auropunctata*): One of the world's worst invasive species, with a painful sting that will impact on outdoor lifestyle, the environment and agricultural industries. These ants are currently in northern Queensland and eradication efforts are underway.

Yellow crazy ants (*Anoplolepis gracilipes*): Ability to spray formic acid which causes burning and irritates the skin and eyes of animals and humans. Found in the Pacific region and on Christmas Island, this ant has also spread extensively since arriving in Queensland.

Under the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007* (BAM Act) administered by the Department of Agriculture and Food, the introduction of these ants into Western Australia is prohibited and control measures must be taken to prevent them entering and establishing in the State.

If you think you have seen any of the above ant species please call the Pest and Disease Information Service on 1800 084 881.

Important disclaimer:

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