

Red imported fire ant response

Red imported fire ant (RIFA), *Solenopsis invicta*, is one of the world's most serious and invasive ant pests because of its harmful effects on people, agriculture, flora/fauna, infrastructure and recreational activities.

What to look for

- Small ants (2-8mm) that vary in size.
- Reddish brown in colour with a darker abdomen.
- Nests that often have no visible entry holes like other ant nests.
- Young nests can be indistinct or start out as small piles of excavated soil.
- A fiery sting that can blister and form pustules at the sting site.
- Nests in open areas like lawns, firebreaks or fence lines.
- Ants that exhibit aggressive behaviour when disturbed.



RIFA nests contain ants of varying sizes. Images above courtesy of National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program.

Where to look

In a commercial or development site:

- where organic material such as soil, potted plants, mulch, hay, manure and turf is stored
- where machinery used for digging, earthmoving or disturbing of soil is stored
- along fencelines
- where waste material is stored
- areas around buildings, gardens and lawns.

In residential areas:

- lawns
- footpaths
- garden beds
- taps.

In rural areas:

- dams
- edges of cultivated land
- crop land post-harvest
- fence lines and firebreaks
- piles of organic matter.

WA Incursion

- In November 2019 RIFA nests were detected in the Fremantle Port area.
- A Quarantine Area Notice was declared- see requirements on the next page.
- The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development is undertaking an eradication program that includes six rounds of treatment and surveillance over two years.
- Surveillance is being conducted in both the Fremantle Port area and Fremantle residential areas.

Quarantine Area Notice requirements

Requirements apply to the below host materials:

- Potted plants.
- Plant mulch, bark and wood chips.
- Manure
- Hay and straw.
- Building rubble (concrete, gravel, soil etc.).
- Soil (including soil attached to non-potted plants, potting mix, and any form of manufactured potting media, pebbles and gravel).
- Grass and turf.
- Soil, turf, grass or other organic matter that has or appears to have been part of a nest or mound built by RIFA.



Quarantine Area in Fremantle Port
as of 4 December 2020



Shipping containers

A movement permit is **not required** to move shipping containers out of the Quarantine Area, but they must be cleaned to remove all RIFA host material. Clean down procedures are available from the DPIRD website.

Machinery/equipment

Any machinery or equipment that has been in contact with RIFA host material such as soil must be cleaned prior to movement out of the Quarantine Area.

A movement permit **is required** if this machinery or equipment has been inside the Quarantine Area for ***more than five days***.

RIFA host material

A movement permit **is required** if host material has been inside the Quarantine Area for ***more than five days***. Permits may stipulate conditions such as chemical treatment.

Report new or suspicious ant activity

To MyPestGuide:

- App: MyPestGuide™ Reporter
Website: mypestguide.agric.wa.gov.au

To the department's Pest and Disease Information Service (PaDIS):

- Phone: 9368 3080
Email: padis@dpiird.wa.gov.au

Request a permit

Contact PaDIS above.

Important disclaimer

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