

# The unwanted guest that built a nest



Red imported fire ant

## Have you seen ants crawling around? They might be looking for food, water or a new place to nest.

Ants are social insects that form small to large colonies. Some are just several ants living on a twig, while others are super-colonies with many millions of workers. Ant colonies can be remarkably different in size, ranging from compact groups occupying a small area to vast super colonies spanning hundreds of kilometres, linked by intricate networks of subterranean tunnels.

### Why is it important to find and report ants?

Your ant reports can help protect native animals, the natural environment and biodiversity. Reporting exotic ant pests early can help protect people enjoying or working outdoors, pets, farm animals and Western Australia's agriculture, food production and trade.

### Why your participation matters

- Early detection** Your reports may help identify potential biosecurity threats early.
- Support our economy** Your reports may prove our crops are safe, keeping WA's exports strong and our markets open.
- Learn and engage** Learn more about insects and other organisms around your home, garden and local community.

## Make a report with MyPestGuide<sup>®</sup> Reporter app

### Materials required

- A mobile device (phone or tablet) with MyPestGuide<sup>®</sup> Reporter app installed.
- A ruler or coin to be in the picture to capture scale (size) of the objects.
- A sheet of white paper.
- Honey or a tiny piece of fruit or some cake crumbs.
- A plastic container and an ice pack.

### Steps to take

Find an area where there is ant activity, in and around the house, in the garden or outdoors.

1. Place a drop of honey or a very small piece of food on a white sheet of paper. Secure the paper and return in about 30 minutes.
2. Take a photo with your phone, either:
  - a) zoom in and lock focus on the ants that are not moving, just eating;
  - or
  - b) carefully place the container on top of the sheet of paper. Then, lifting the paper and container together, place the ice pack under the sheet of paper. Wait until the ant cools to reduce its activity and then remove the container and take the picture.
3. Send the report, telling us:



**Report your observations**  
MyPestGuide<sup>®</sup> Reporter  
via app or online  
[mypestguide.dpird.wa.gov.au](http://mypestguide.dpird.wa.gov.au)

**How they look:** their appearance, colour, shape and size.

**What they were doing:** where you saw them, the possible nesting place, their behaviour i.e. collecting food or carrying dead insects.

