

Factsheet

October 2019

Cocktail ants (*Crematogaster* sp.)

Summary

Native ants of the genus *Crematogaster* (*Crematogaster* sp.) are harmless ants and it is rare to see them indoors. These ants are commonly known as cocktail ants because of their habit of raising their abdomens when alarmed, but are also called valentine ants due to their distinctive heart-shaped gaster (abdomen).

Where are they found?

These ants are usually associated with bush land or bush covered residential blocks. Cocktail ants usually have nests above the ground and are often seen nesting and foraging in trees.



Damage

These ants do not cause any damage, however they sometimes nest within outdoor power points and this should be discouraged.

Treatment

Normally these ants do not cause any problems and are of no concern. If ants are coming indoors, surface sprays can be used around entrance areas, on door landings and window sills to keep the ants from coming indoors. Sugary liquid or gel type ant baits sold at supermarkets or online may be attractive to the ants and can help reduce populations. If this isn't effective, treatment at the nest site outdoors with permethrin sprays available from garden centres or hardware stores will assist. If ants are nesting within power points do not spray the power points with liquid insecticides, but instead spray the surrounds with a residual surface spray until the problem resolves.

Watch out!

Ants are often difficult to identify! There are a number of ants that have not established in Western Australia, but could significantly impact our outdoor lifestyle and WA's agricultural industries and environment. See overleaf for reportable species!

Exotic ant threats to WA

Under the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007* (BAM Act) the introduction of these ants into WA is prohibited and **any suspect sightings must be reported**. Below are a few species we are particularly concerned about.



Browsing ant (*Lepisiota frauenfeldi*)

Native to southern Europe, they thrive in a Mediterranean climate and are ideally suited to Australian conditions. These aggressive ants form multi-queened super-colonies, quickly reaching very high populations and displacing native ant species and other invertebrates. They are also a significant horticultural and domestic pest. There have been a number of incursions in Australia, although all known infestations are under eradication.



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.



Carpenter ants (*Camponotus* spp.)

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.

Reporting options

Report unfamiliar, problematic or possible exotic pests via the options below:

- Pest and Disease Information Service (08) 9368 3080 or padis@dpird.wa.gov.au
- MyPestGuide™ Reporter App
- mypestguide.agric.wa.gov.au

For more information, see agric.wa.gov.au/ants

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