

Fact sheet

October 2019

Odorous garden ants (*Iridomyrmex chasei* spp.)

Summary

Native ants commonly referred to as odorous garden ants belong to the *Iridomyrmex chasei* species group. These ants are harmless and do not sting.

Where are they found?

These ants nest in the ground outside and may be observed excavating sand in gardens and pathways. They may also be seen climbing trees and tending pests such as scale, mealy bugs and aphids.

Damage

These ants do not sting and do not damage or nest in buildings. They can be a nuisance in spring and summer when their numbers are at their highest and winged reproductive ants group together and leave the nest (known as swarming). These ants rarely enter the home.

Treatment

Liquid sprays offer much better control for these ants than dusts or granules and a number of products are available. Sprays containing chemicals such as permethrin will be effective when applied to nesting and foraging areas. These products can be obtained from garden centres and hardware stores



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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