



Coastal brown ants (*Pheidole megacephala*) (above) and sand excavated by coastal brown ants (below)

Coastal brown ants (*Pheidole megacephala*)

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

Coastal brown ants (*Pheidole megacephala*), also called big-headed ants, are an introduced species to Australia and a major pest ant species in Western Australia. There are two very different-sized 'castes' (types) of worker ants, with the larger-headed ant making up about 1 per cent of the population.

Where are they found?

Coastal brown ants are often seen in lawns and in brick paving, often excavating large amounts of sand from between cracks. These ants are specialists in invading disturbed areas, making them ideally suited to the urban environment. If present in high numbers, they may enter the home to forage for fat and protein rich food.

Damage

If left untreated these ants may excavate so extensively that brick paving becomes destabilised. Roots of plants and lawn can become too aerated from soil excavation that the plants show signs of water stress.

Treatment

Granular baits containing hydramethylnon are recommended for control and are registered for coastal brown ants. These products can be purchased from garden

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)

centres, hardware stores and agricultural chemical retailers. Read label and apply as directed. Further important information on the application of these baits can be found on our website at agric.wa.gov.au/n/1743.

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 1800 084 881.

Important disclaimer:

The Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) and the State of Western Australia accept no liability whatsoever by reason of negligence or otherwise arising from the use or release of this information or any part of it.