

Tawny crazy ant fact sheet

Tawny crazy ants are a new invasive ant species from South America. They form large, very dense, interconnected infestations. These ants nest and feed inside houses as well as outside. They have a tendency of shorting out electrical equipment and are an extreme nuisance to live with. If these ants become established in your neighborhood, they will spread from property to property and you will be stuck with them. Control with pesticides is not very effective and expensive. The best course of action is to prevent them from colonizing your area.

Prevention

- Inspect all outdoor items before bringing them home. Tawny crazy ants are very good at getting into things. They will nest in flower pots, bags of mulch or soil, metal patio furniture, construction materials as well as other items. For this reason, it is VERY important that you inspect items for infestation before bringing them home with you.
- Talk with your neighbors. Spread the word about the need to be vigilant in preventing these ants from colonizing your neighborhood.
- Look for these ants, if you catch them before the population is large, it may be possible to eradicate them. (All effected neighbors and adjoining properties will have to co-operate in several simultaneous treatments. Seek advice.)

Identification

- You see a whole lot of ants running around.
- They are all small to medium sized ants (1/8" long). And they are all roughly the same size.
- They are yellowish-reddish-brown in color and the same color over their whole body.
- They do not sting ("bite") like fire ants.
- They form loose trails. The ants run around erratically. They are not out in the middle of a hot day.
- Squash a couple of ants between your fingers and smell them. Tawny crazy ants will have a slight acrid smell (like acid), NOT the strong odor of blue cheese. "Smells like acid, send it in. Smells like blue cheese leave it be."

If you have a good magnifying glass, or microscope tawny crazy ants will have ...

- One node between abdomen and thorax
- A small circle of hairs at tip of abdomen
- Long legs & antennae
- Hairs on thorax arranged in pairs

How to submit samples

1. Collect ants in a plastic bag, small container or something similar. Please do NOT collect on tape! Collect at least 10 individuals. A small piece of hot dog as a bait, placed into a bag after ants accumulate is convenient. Place sample into the freezer for at least 4 hours to kill the ants. Remove any bait left in the bag! Include a small piece of dry tissue paper in the bag for padding and as a drying agent. Include a label with the date you collected them and a precise locality (either latitude and longitude or street address). Include an e-mail address where we can contact you. Either bring or mail (if mailing please use a bubble envelope) the ants to one of the following:

Wizzie Brown

Edward LeBrun

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
1600-B Smith Road
Austin, TX 78721

Invasive Species Research Group
Brackenridge Field Laboratory
2907 Lake Austin Blvd.
Austin, TX 78703

Treatment Options

- Removing harborage areas- fallen limbs, rocks, leaf litter, etc. These ants will nest under pretty much anything on the ground, so you may want to remove anything that is not necessary.
- Alter moisture conditions (crazy ants prefer moist, humid conditions)- reduce watering, repair any leaks, improve drainage
- Eliminate honeydew producers from area. Crazy ants tend honeydew producers such as aphids, whiteflies, hoppers, mealybugs and scale insects.
- Use pesticide sprays to treat infested areas- under rocks, along landscape edging, etc. Pesticide sprays can also be used to create a barrier around the outside of the home. Piles of dead ants may build up in treated areas, so they must be removed to keep the barrier maintained.
- Hire a pest management professional (PMP). PMPs have access to pesticides that are unavailable to homeowners and they also have experience dealing with pest problems regularly.

You can find out more information here:

<https://www.facebook.com/tawnycrazyants>

<http://urbanentomology.tamu.edu/ants/raspberry.html>

<http://www.tsusinvasives.org/database/raspberry-crazy-ant.html>