



Crematogaster species (top photo: PaDIL)

Cocktail ants (*Crematogaster* sp.)

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

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

Contact

Pest and Disease Information Service
(PaDIS)

Call: (08) 9368 3080

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Black carpenter ant (*Camponotus pennsylvanicus*) (photo: PaDIL), red imported fire ant, electric ant (photo: PaDIL), yellow crazy ant (photo: PaDIL)

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.

Exotic threats

The following exotic 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 on 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.