



ants

There are many varieties of ants, but in Western Australia the problem causing ants are coastal brown ants and argentine ants



Types of ants

Argentine ants

Argentine ants are a major cosmopolitan pest ant species. Primary a suburban pest, they will often enter houses searching for food and moisture. They are very ordinary looking, small, brown, slender and 2.6 to 3.2 mm long. The worker ants are uniform in shape and size and move in well defined trails, sometimes 3 ants wide, and will walk over a persons hand if placed in their trail. They have slight greasy, musty odour when crushed. Argentine ants do not possess a sting but will bite readily, although the bite is not painful.

Their food preference is the sugary honeydew produced by aphids, mealy bugs and scale insects. Heavy trails of Argentine ants are often seen on the trunks of trees and shrubs. They can feed on a wide variety of food, including sweet drinks, cakes, pet food, meat and dead insects. The queen can live for several years, workers for 10-12 months.

Coastal brown ants

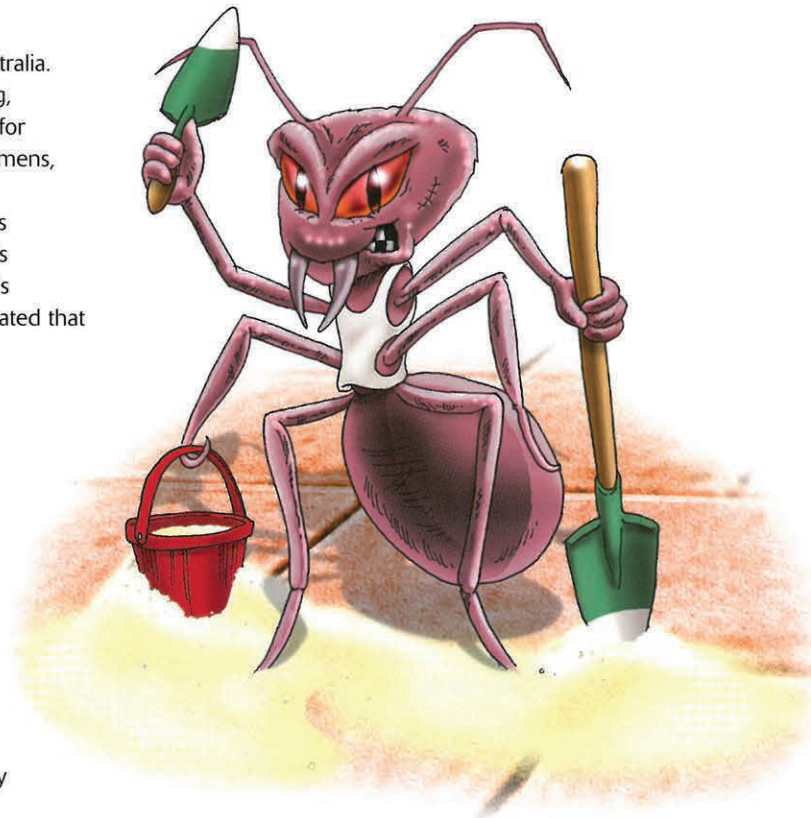
Coastal brown ants are a major nuisance ant species in Western Australia. They are an urban pest and are often seen in lawns and brick paving, which they tend to undermine. They can be determined by looking for small, light ginger brown coloured ants with shiny dark brown abdomens, the smaller 'minors' are 2 – 3mm long and the larger 'major' are 3.5 – 4.5mm long. With no odour when crushed. Infestations of ants are characterised by lines of inter-connected holes and small mounds of excavated soil. Excavations can be so extensive that brick paving is destabilised and the roots of plants and the lawn can become so aerated that the plants subsequently die by drying out.

While these ants can sting, the sting does not cause discomfort to humans. Coastal brown Ants are particularly active in late summer, autumn and early winter. They nest outside in the ground and only occasionally invade dwellings when populations outside are very high. However, invasions of dwellings can be severe. These ants prefer meat or fat/oil based foods.

Helpful hints

Apart from the natural radial expansion of existing colonies, Ants are spread unintentionally through transport by humans via a wide range of commodities, including soil, pot plants, foodstuff and garbage. Several plant nurseries in the metropolitan and country areas are infested and present a risk of spread.

- Check all pot plants and other plant material you purchase or are given
- If moving property, immerse the planted pots for 30 seconds in a solution of an insecticide registered for the control of ants



environmentally aware pest & weed management

Information sourced from Department of Agriculture