

Argentine ant

Formicidae - *Linepithema humile*



What does it look like?

Argentine ant are a small invasive exotic insect that grow to 3mm long and are a uniform honey-brown colour. Foraging ants move steadily, not slowly in defined continuous trails that can often be seen going up trees or shrubs, especially if these are flowering. They have a slight greasy odour when crushed.

Why is it a problem?

Unlike most other ants, they climb trees to get to food sources.

Argentine ant colonies cooperate with each other, and can combine over winter into super-colonies. They reach enormous numbers, which means they have a huge appetite. It also makes them more aggressive towards other insect populations through their sheer numbers.

The main impact on horticulture is the ability of Argentine ants to 'farm' sap-sucking aphids and scale insects, leading to a higher risk of disease transmission, reduction of crop yield and/or quality, disruption of biological control agents and an increase in spray regimes. The ants can't sting but some people react to their bite.

Control methods

Please contact Council's biosecurity team for advice on controlling this pest.

More information

Similar species: Similar to the Darwin's ant which give off a weaker odour when crushed and are around 2mm long.

Management programme

- Sustained Control

Rules

- Council will work with landowner/occupier, including developing agreements for the effective management of this pest to protect the values of specific sites.
For more information about this Rule, refer to our Regional Pest Management Plan page 35, under Related Links.
- All occupiers shall on a complaints basis, and unless otherwise agreed between the neighbours and an authorised person, destroy Argentine and Darwin's ants within 200m of a boundary with an adjacent property within 21 calendar days of being notified of the presence of the pest, where the adjacent land occupier is controlling these pests on their land.