

Little Black Ant

Common Name: Little black ant

Common Family Name: Ants

Origin: Possibly a native of the United States, where it is found most commonly in the eastern half, but frequently in California as well.



Biology: When found outdoors this ant nests primarily in the soil under debris or other objects, as well as in open areas and in turf. The nest opening will have a small crater of soil around it. Less commonly the nests may be found in cavities under bark or other areas, as well as within structures in walls or under carpets. Colonies are small but have numerous queens, and will relocate when they are disturbed. Preferred foods seem to be sugar materials such as honeydew, but they also feed on protein from live or dead insects.

Identification: This ant is one of our smallest, with workers only about 1.5 mm long. It is related to the Pharaoh Ant and is the same size, but is a shiny black color instead of the orange of the Pharaoh Ant. It is a double-node ant and workers are all the same size. The antennae have 12 segments, with the last 3 segments enlarged to form a club.

Characteristics Important in Control: Control of these ants includes correction of the attractions that drew them to a property, including harborage sites, food sources, and moisture conditions. Elimination of insects that provide protein or honeydew sources reduces ant foraging in an area, and cleanup of unnecessary debris or objects on the soil that provide harborage eliminates nesting. Ant bait products in liquid or gel formulations can be highly effective, and carbohydrate formulations may be preferred. Location of the nest sites is important, and when found can be treated directly with a residual dust insecticide.