



Of all the pest problems a homeowner could potentially face, ants seem like the least threatening. In fact, the average human has seen so many ants in their lifetime that they've just become a fact of life. Canada's ants may come in many shapes and sizes (mostly tiny), but you shouldn't disregard them for their sheer size. Every ant introduces a unique challenge to Canadian homeowners who wage a seemingly endless war against pests.

Truly Nolen Canada has compiled this Homeowner's Handbook to give you a comprehensive field guide on ants you may find in and around your home. Of course, you can always call a Truly Nolen Pest Expert if you need help identifying and removing these ants for good.

IDENTIFYING CANADIAN ANTS

Carpenter Ants



Carpenter ants sound like productive insects, but they're actually not good at building. In fact, they should be called demolisher ants, because they love to tunnel through wood, similar to termites.

Appearance

In order to tunnel through solid wood, these ants will need to be big. Carpenter Ants can grow up to 1.3cm long. They are predominantly black, but can have brown bodies.

Habitat

When carpenter ants burrow into wood, they usually create nests there. Bundles of wood and other wood structures near homes can be a good place to look. These galleries are the condominiums of the carpenter ant world.

Human Interaction

Carpenter ants aren't very interested in humans, so you won't have to worry about being bitten by them. They do have a sweet tooth, however, so be sure to keep sugary foods sealed.

Problems Caused

Carpenter ants don't actually eat the wood while burrowing, so most holes in wood structures in your home can be reinforced and sealed. However, over time, these ants can cause damage to the home's structure, which may make it unsafe and expensive to repair.

Pharaoh Ants



Don't let the name fool you – these ants are far from royalty. Not only does the Pharaoh ant pack a painful sting, it also enjoys raiding cupboards and pantries for delicious human food.

Appearance

Pharaoh ants aren't much smaller than the common field ant but vary in color, making it difficult to identify on the spot. The majority of these ants are typically less than 2mm long and are golden in colour.

Habitat

Pharaoh ants originated in tropical climates, so they're more than comfortable in warm, moist environments. These ants usually build their colonies very close to buildings and structures. Pharaoh ants cannot survive the harsh Canadian winters, which is why you will see them inside.

Human Interaction

Like other ants, Pharaoh ants aren't aggressive, but can deliver a painful bite if they feel threatened. If you do spot Pharaoh ants, keep your distance and lure them using non-toxic traps instead. These ants can find their way into any place. Due to their small size, they can spread throughout a structure very quickly and are one of those more difficult species to control. We don't recommend trying to use traps or poisons with Pharaoh ants.

Problems Caused

The sting of a Pharaoh ant can be painful, but is nothing compared to the damage they can cause to items in your home. Pharaoh ants are known to chew through a variety of household materials that include rubber, cloth, and the insulation on cables and cords. They are extremely difficult to treat because if the colony perceives any threats, it "buds" and becomes 5-6 colonies.



Pavement Ants

Pavement ants are known to engage in wars with other groups of pavement ants over territory. You can find their nests between sidewalk cracks and in lawns close to pavement. They like the sandy crevices offered by public walkways. The amount of ants engaging in battle can number in the hundreds of thousands.

Appearance

Pavement ants are smaller than the average ant you'll come across – often ranging between 2 to 4mm long. They are mostly black with brown legs, and appear taller than most common ants as well.

Habitat

You might have guessed it: pavement. You can commonly find these ants in the cracks of pavement and other masonry outdoors.

Human Interaction

Pavement ants are only known for having a sweet tooth, so you don't have to worry about stings or chewed wires.

Problems Caused

In large numbers, Pavement ants can overrun your home and commandeer the food in your kitchen, ruining opened boxes and packages in a pantry or cupboard.



Common Field Ants

These are the ants you can find virtually anywhere due to the sheer size of their population, which is estimated by biologists to be nearly 10 quadrillion – nearly 1.5 million times the human population on Earth.

Appearance

Field ants can vary slightly in color, but are mostly black. These tiny creatures can be hard to spot from afar, ranging from 2.5 to 6.25mm in length.

Habitat

Field ants typically establish colonies outdoors in rich soil. These colonies can be found with a close eye and look very much like a mound of soil or dirt.

Human Interaction

Like other ant species, the worker ants will explore the perimeter of the colony in search of food. This often leads them into homes and other buildings where food and water sources are available.

Problems Caused

Field ants aren't known for biting and aren't venomous, but can quickly overwhelm a home if it proves to be a reliable source of food and water. Ants can invade cupboards and pantries, ruining both food and appetites.

Citronella Ants



Citronella ants are known to release a lemon-scented odor when disturbed. This is a sure sign you have citronella ants. They are often confused with termites because of their similar appearance and behavior to the wood-destroying pest.

Appearance

The citronella ant ranges in size from 4mm to 8mm, depending on the role of the ant. Queens tend to be the largest in the colony. Their color is a translucent golden brown.

Habitat

These ants like to live in moist areas, such as rotting logs or soil. They leave behind mounds of soil and sand when digging these galleries, which is one way to identify an issue. If a home has a citronella ant problem, it most likely has a moisture problem.

Human Interaction

While harmless to humans, the citronella ant does enjoy the sweet honeydew left behind from other insects. When stepped on, it is the worker ants that emit a lemony smell.

Problems Caused

Main issues with citronella ants typically happen when moisture accumulates inside a home. They are a nuisance to deal with once an infestation has occurred, but generally won't cause structural damage the way carpenter ants would.

Acrobat Ants



These ants get their name from the acrobatic way they raise their abdomen when disturbed. They can get it all the way over their heads!

Appearance

Acrobat ants have a heart-shaped abdomen when seen from above. They are typically smaller than 6mm in length and dark brown in color.

Habitat

These ants like to set up in wooden structures that have previously been occupied by termites and carpenter ants, after they have long gone. They like to live in structures, and finding nests is often as easy as identifying a trail of ant debris.

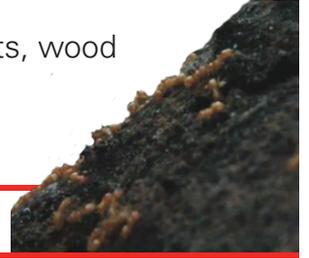
Human Interaction

Acrobat ants prefer to eat the sweet secretions from insects such as aphids. Inside a home, they are likely to gravitate towards sweet tastes and meats if left vulnerable to insects.

Problems Caused

Acrobat ants can make their way into homes a number ways. Cracks in foundations, under doors and through softened wood are just a few common ways they will infiltrate your home.

Once inside, acrobat ants need to forage for food. This leaves behind trails of other insects, wood dust and potentially other acrobat ants.



Thief Ants

Thief ants are one of the smallest ants we come across, measuring just 1.5mm to 2mm in length. They get their name from their tendency to steal the larvae and pupae from neighboring colonies.

Appearance

The thief ant is extremely small, with a dark brown abdomen and golden-colored body. These ants have two antennae protruding from their heads.

Habitat

Thief ant nests can be extremely difficult to locate, given their ability to squeeze into the tiniest of crevices. They like to set up in rotting wood and soil. Kitchens provide ideal conditions because of food sources and, often, many wooden cabinetry and countertops.

Human Interaction

Thief ants don't typically bother with humans. They're much too busy stealing protein sources from other groups of ants. Treating these ants can be extremely challenging due to their size.

Problems Caused

Thief ants feed on protein, which includes foods such as nuts, meats, peanut butter, cheeses and anything sweet. Because worker ants are so small, they can find their way into food packaging – becoming quite the headache. Outside the home, thief ants forage for dead insects and rodents.



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