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## Ants – control is no picnic

While many pests are seasonal there is one with an all year round effect – ants! Unless you know the species of ant, control can be guess work. Different species of ants require different control methods and Australia is home to more than 2000 species of ants, of which more than 800 are found in Western Australia.

The most common exterior excavating ant is the coastal brown ant (*Pheidole megacephala*) from Africa, a foraging ant that requires a granular bait with the active ingredient hydramethylnon for control. House infesting ants such as white-footed house ants (*Technomyrmex* species) and black house ants (*Ochetellus* species) respond best to liquid or gel baits. Odorous garden ants (*Iridomyrmex* species) and other native species are best treated with permethrin or bifenthrin sprays. Some native ants like *Camponotus* and *Tetramorium* generally cause no problems and can be left to do what ants do.

Argentine ants, once a threat, now rarely seem to be reported as problematic. Singapore ants occasionally flare up in the north of the state. Tramp ants and browsing ants have been intercepted a few times around airports or seaports and have been eradicated when found.

Exotic species are a constant threat to our state and if established here would impact on our outdoor lifestyle and WA's agricultural and food industries. Red-imported fire ants and electric ants are serious ant pests of the world. Both are aggressive and inflict painful stings and are present in Queensland.

Yellow crazy ants have the ability to spray formic acid which causes burning and irritates the skin and eyes of humans and animals. Yellow crazy ants are present in Queensland and on Christmas Island. Any of these species could accidentally be imported into WA.

**Unfamiliar ants or ants suspected of being transported in freight or cargo, should be reported to the Pest and Information Service on 1800 084 881.** For ant identification services, we request only dead specimens are submitted. Collect using the sticky side of clear sticky tape, gently adhere it to white paper, place in the freezer to kill ants (1hr+) and post with your address and contact details. For more information about submitting specimens for identification see: [agric.wa.gov.au/n/2383](http://agric.wa.gov.au/n/2383) or call us.



Exotic browsing ant, *Lepisiota frauenfeldi*. Capable of reaching high populations and displacing native species.