

# Protect Maui from the Little Fire Ant

Several ant species closely resemble the Little Fire Ant and can only be identified under a microscope. Submit suspect ants to the Maui Invasive Species Committee.



photos © Alexander Wild,  
used by permission

**Common name:** Little Fire Ant (LFA)

**Scientific name:** *Wasmannia auropunctata*

**Behavior:** Lives in trees as well as on the ground; they never build mounds. LFA sting when trapped, often on torso when they fall from overhanging brush.

**Description:** Tiny at about 1/16th inch (2mm) long. All one color, yellowish-orange to red and all worker ants are the same size.



Collect suspect ants using peanut butter & a chopstick, bag & freeze overnight, label with your contact information and mail to:

**MISC, PO Box 983, Makawao HI 96768.**

Call or email with questions: [miscpr@hawaii.edu](mailto:miscpr@hawaii.edu), 573-6472.

## LFA are not the same as the Tropical Fire Ant



photos © Alexander Wild, used by permission

**Common name:** Tropical Fire Ant

**Scientific name:** *Solenopsis geminata*

**Behavior:** Aggressive swarming ant with a painful sting; builds low (1 inch high) mounds. **A mound larger than 3 inches should be reported to MISC as it could indicate Red Imported Fire Ant, a pest not known from Hawaii.**

**Description:** Medium to large: 1/8th to 3/16th inch (3-5mm).

Usually reddish - brown to brown with tail segment darker than the rest of the body. The workers come in a variety of sizes.



ACTUAL SIZE COMPARED  
TO LITTLE FIRE ANT

Find more resources at [www.stoptheant.org](http://www.stoptheant.org)



# Other Ants on Maui:

Nearly 50 different species of ants have been detected on Maui even though Hawai'i has no native ants. By learning these ant species, you can better detect little fire ants.



photos © Alexander Wild, used by permission



ACTUAL SIZE COMPARED  
TO LITTLE FIRE ANT

**Common name:** Black Crazy Ant

**Scientific name:** *Paratrechina longicornis* & *Nylanderia* spp.

**Behavior:** Fast-moving dark ants that bite.

**Description:** Medium size: 1/16th to 1/8th inch (2.5-3mm), all workers are the same size. Antennae and legs are unusually long.



photos © Alexander Wild, used by permission

**Common name:** Yellow Crazy Ant

**Scientific name:** *Anoplolepis gracilipes*

**Behavior:** Ants move quickly without obvious pattern. They rarely bite.

**Description:** Large at 3/16th inch (5mm), all workers are the same size. Yellowish-brown to reddish-brown. Antennae and legs are unusually long.



ACTUAL SIZE COMPARED  
TO LITTLE FIRE ANT



photos © Alexander Wild,  
used by permission

ACTUAL SIZE COMPARED  
TO LITTLE FIRE ANT

**Common name:** Big-headed Ant  
**Scientific name:** *Pheidole megacephala*

**Behavior:** Occasionally bites.

**Description:** Medium size: 1/8 inch long (2-4mm), brownish-yellow in color. Workers come in two sizes: normal-heads and fat-heads. This is the most common ant on Maui.



photos © Alexander Wild, used by permission

**Common name:** Carpenter Ant

**Scientific name:** *Camponotus variegatus*

**Behavior:** Generally nocturnal. Lives in dead wood.

**Description:** Large at 3/16th - 1/2 inch (5-12mm) long.

Workers vary in size. Yellowish-brown in color with dark stripes around the last segment. This is the largest ant in Maui.



ACTUAL SIZE COMPARED  
TO LITTLE FIRE ANT



photos © Alexander Wild, used by permission

**Common name:** Black House Ant

**Scientific name:** *Ochetellus glaber*

**Behavior:** Lives in trees and also invades homes.

**Description:** 1/16th to 1/8th inch (2-3 mm). All workers are the same size and ants are completely black.



ACTUAL SIZE COMPARED  
TO LITTLE FIRE ANT



**You may have little fire ants without ANY of the following experiences, so test for ants whether or not you experience:**

- Small, slow-moving orange or red ants.
- Stings on your neck or torso, particularly when working in overhanging brush, bananas, and fruit trees.
- Any movement of soil, plants, mulch, or lumber from an area infested with little fire ants.
- Animals' exposed skin becoming "mangy" and eyes becoming cloudy; a potential indication that little fire ants could be stinging their cornea.

## Ants by actual size



Little Fire Ant



Black House Ant



Black Crazy Ant



Big-Headed Ant\*



Tropical Fire Ant\*



Yellow Crazy Ant



Carpenter Ant\*



\* The workers of some ant species (Tropical Fire Ant, Big-Headed Ant, and Carpenter Ant) vary in size. LFA workers are all the same size- tiny!



Credit: Masako Cordray

## How to collect a sample of ants:

1. Smear a **thin** coat of peanut butter on one end of a disposable chopstick or popsicle stick. (A thick coat is no more attractive to ants and only makes identification more difficult).
2. Place sticks in shady areas in, around, and on plants, including potted plants. For a thorough survey, place at least three sticks per plant, and/ or one stick every two feet. Leave the sticks out for 45 minutes to 1 hour.
3. Carefully pick up the sticks (so the ants don't fall off!), and seal them in a plastic bag. Write your name, contact number, and the date on the bag and freeze for 24 hours to kill the ants. An address is helpful, but not required.
4. Just because you have ants, doesn't mean they are little fire ants. Some ants are look-alikes and require an expert to identify them. Turn in ALL ant samples for identification and peace of mind.
5. Send samples to: Maui Invasive Species Committee, PO Box 983, Makawao, HI 96768



**Call or email MISC if you have any questions: [miscpr@hawaii.edu](mailto:miscpr@hawaii.edu), 573-6472**

**Find more resources at [www.stoptheant.org](http://www.stoptheant.org)**