Ant Identification Guide

Learn How To Identify Ants

By DoMyOwn staff

OVERVIEW

While most folks understand what an ant looks like they may have trouble distinguishing an ant from a termite. This can be difficult to do because termites and ants do look very much alike, especially during the spring and fall when the winged cast members are starting to fly around to find grounds for a new nest.

Ants:
- Ants have noticeable waists
- Ants have clubbed or bent antennae
- Ants have longer legs
- When wings are present, the front wings will be longer than the back wings on ants

vs

Termites:
- Termites have a thick waist
- Termites have straight antennae
- Termites have shorter legs
- When wings are present, both pairs of wings will be the same length on a termite

Once you have determined you are indeed dealing with ants you should know that there a few species of ants that must be treated differently than getting rid of general ant species.

Carpenter Ants:
- Carpenter ants are 1/4" - 1/2" long
- Carpenter ants vary in color from black to dark red
- Carpenter ants can bite but they cannot sting
- Carpenter ants can be found in dead or damaged trees, stumps and wood piles outside. Inside, carpenter ants are usually found where wood has retained excess moisture from a leaky pipe or other leak in a void.
- Carpenter ants leave behind debris that will include coarse sawdust and insect body parts.

Fire Ants:
- Fire ants are 1/16" - 1/4" long
- Fire ants are reddish brown with a darker back end or abdomen
- Fire ants can bite and they also have a very painful sting
- Fire ants make dirt mounds, usually in sunny areas in open soil or grass
- Fire ants are usually found in the southeast states

Crazy Ants:
- Crazy ants are 1/16" - 1/8" long
- Crazy ants have a slender dark brown-black body
- Crazy ants have very long legs
- Crazy ants can bite but they cannot sting
- Crazy ants tend to wander in an erratic fashion which makes them appear to be lost
- Crazy ants are usually limited to coastal southern states

Texas Leaf Cutter Ants:
- Leaf cutter ants are 1/16" - 1/2" long
Leaf cutter ants are reddish brown to dark brown.
Leaf cutter ants build numerous crater-like mounds in each nesting area.
Leaf cutter ants strip the foliage off of plants.
Leaf cutter ants are mostly contained to Texas.

If you find you have one of these species of ants, please follow the specialized treatment guides for them:
- Carpenter Ant Treatment
- Fire Ant Treatment

AVERAGE ANT SIZE COMPARISON

- **CRAZY ANT**: 1/16 INCH
- **FIRE ANT**: 1/4 INCH
- **CARPENTER ANT**: 1/2 INCH

Queen (female)
Eggs
Larvae
Pupae
Male
Worker (female)
Ants can range in size from 1/16" - 1/2" long depending on the species and the ant's role in the colony.

SHAPE

- Ants have noticeable waists
- Ants have clubbed or bent antennae
- Ants have 6 legs
- When wings are present, the front wings will be longer than the back wings on ants
- Some ant species will have a stinger present

COLOR

What color are ants? Ants can be a very wide variety of colors from very light tan to black, depending on the species.

RANGE
Where do ants live? Ants live in every state of the US.