Ant Identification Guide

How To Identify Ants

By DoMyOwn staff



Wondering what kind of ants you have? Start by comparing the ant's size, color, antennae, body shape, and the number of nodes at its narrow waist. Different ant species have distinct physical characteristics and behaviors that can help you tell them apart. Use this ant identification guide to compare these features and identify common types of ants found in and around homes.

Ants are a common nuisance around the home, parks, schools, and anywhere people congregate. Most people identify ants by their coloring, often red or black, but there are actually almost 1,000 species of ants in the United States alone!

There are several different methods of treating for ants and various products available to get rid of ants and prevent them from returning to your property. Identifying what type of ants are invading your space is important when selecting a treatment method and product. Some methods work better for certain ant species than other methods and not every ant killer product is labeled for all ant species.

Read below to quickly identify what type of ant may be on your property, decide if you have ants or termites, and learn the many different species of ants. At the bottom of this guide is a breakdown of the various ant species, including:

- Carpenter Ants
- Fire Ants
- Little Black Ants
- Pavement Ants

Choose a topic below to learn how to identify ants, or keep reading to understand which types of ants could be present.

- Ant Size
- Ant Shape
- Ant Color
- Ants vs. Termites

Ants vs. Termites



While most 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:

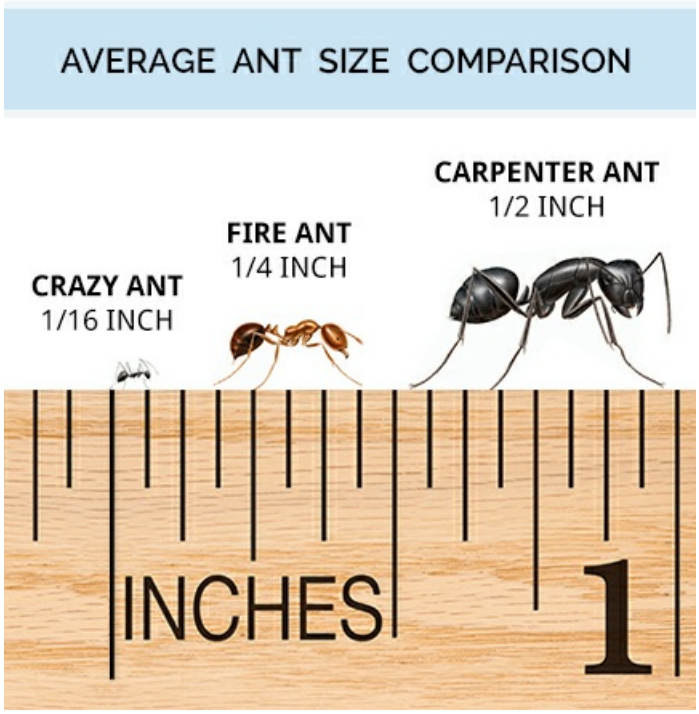
- Ants have noticeable waists
- Ants have clubbed or bent antennae
- Ants have longer legs
- When wings are present, the front wings will be longer than the back wings on ants

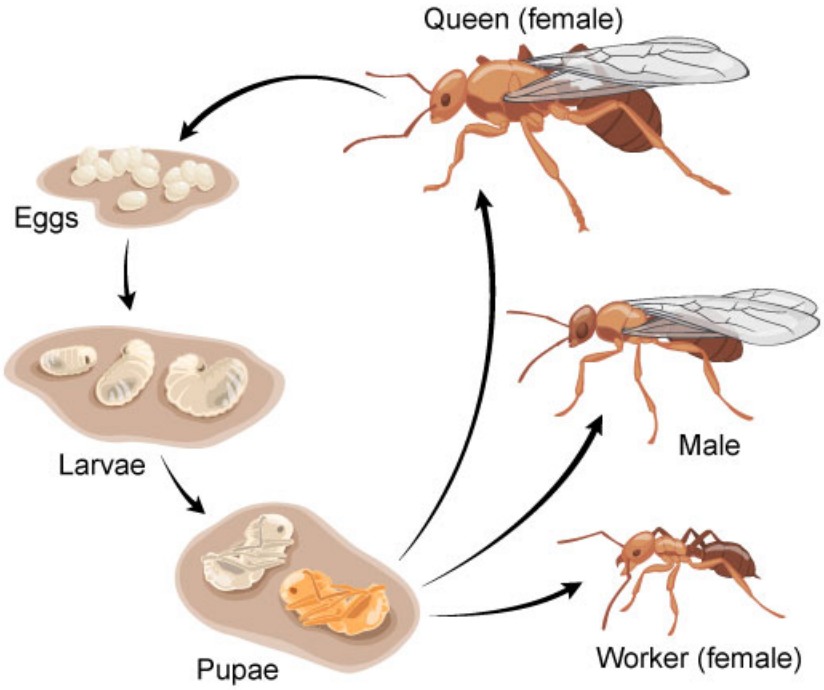
vs

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

SIZE

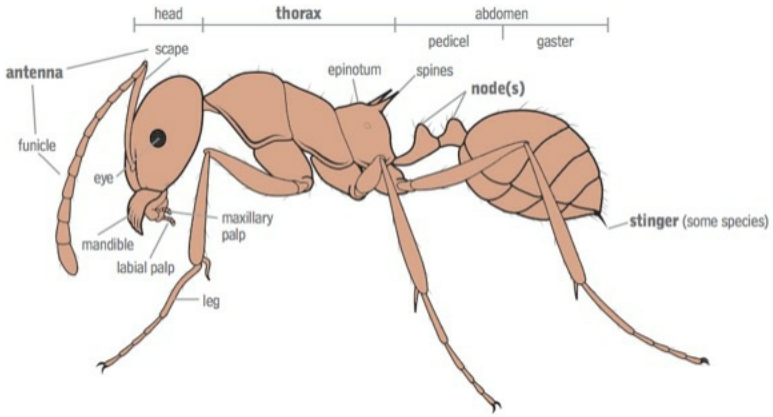






Ants can range in size from 1/16" - 1/2" long depending on the species and the ant's role in the colony.

SHAPE



Ants share the following characteristics:

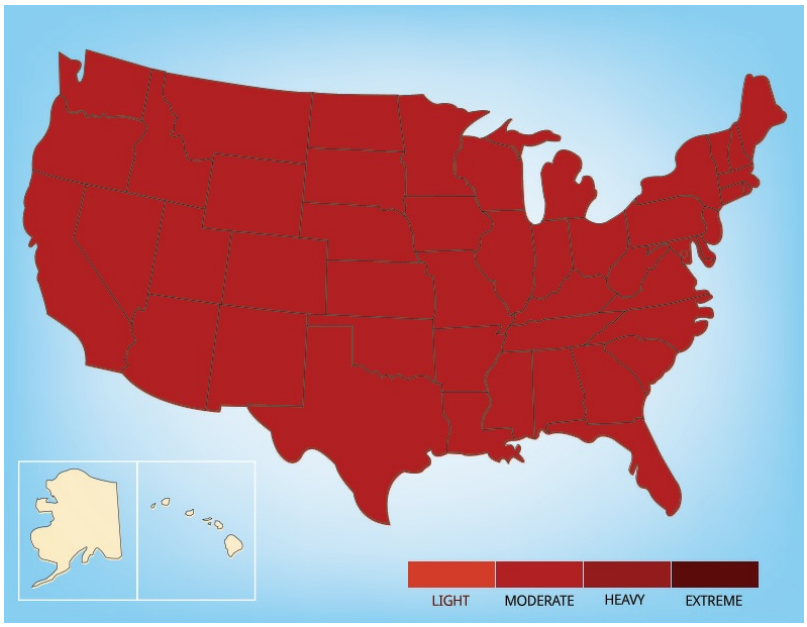
- A head with two clubbed or bent antenna.
- A thorax, also known as the mesosoma, is the middle of the ant's body and is a muscular hub. The ant's legs are connected to the thorax.
- An abdomen, also known as the gaster, the larger body part at the back of an ant's body that contains the heart and digestive system.
- 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.

Now that you understand the characteristics shared by ants, you can better identify different species of ants by their differences. Read below to learn more about the most common ant species.



Acrobat Ants

- Two nodes
- Black and red coloring
- Has stinger
- 1/8 inch long

- Found across the United States
- Will eat sweets and proteins



Argentine Ants

- One node
- Medium or light brown
- No stinger
- 1/8 inch long
- Found in California, Pacific Northwest, Midwest, and Southeastern US
- Will eat sweets, proteins, and fats



Carpenter Ants

- One node
- Varies in color, from black to brown to red
- No stinger
- 1/4 to 1/2 inch long
- Have large mandibles (jaws/pinchers on the head)
- Found throughout the US
- Will build nests in moist, rotting wood. Can sometimes be found in walls indoors and in rotten tree stumps and logs outside.
- Will eat food debris indoors

Learn how to get rid of carpenter ants



Crazy Ants

There are many types of crazy ants, including Caribbean Crazy Ants and Crazy Rasberry Ants. All share the following features:

- One node
- Vary in color, black to red to brown
- No stinger
- 1/16 to 1/8 inch long

- Very long antennae and legs
- Slender body
- Mostly found in southwest and southeast US
- Move erratically, appear to be confused or lost
- Prefer sweets and insects



Fire Ants

- Two nodes
- Red with a darker reddish-brown abdomen
- Has stinger, very painful sting
- 1/16 - 1/4 inch long
- Found in Southeast and Southwest USA
- Prefer high-protein foods

Learn the two methods for getting rid of fire ants with professional fire ant control products.



Ghost Ants

- One node (hard to see)
- Black head and thorax, pale abdomen and legs
- No stinger
- 1/16 inch long
- Mostly found in Pacific Northwest, Florida, and Hawaii
- Prefer sweets and insects
- Will forage for water during dry weather



Little Black Ants

- Two nodes
- Black
- Has stinger
- 1/16 inch, very small (hence the name)
- Found in southern California and parts of Texas and Oklahoma

- Eat sugars, grease, and oils

Learn how to get rid of little black antswith our DIY guide.



Odorous House Ants

- One node (hard to see, hidden by abdomen)
- Brown or black uniform color
- No stinger
- 1/8 inch long
- Emits a rotten odor when crushed
- Found throughout most of the US but not in the Southeast
- Prefer sweets but will eat high-protein or greasy foods if available



Pavement Ants

- Two nodes
- Light brown or black, legs and antennae are paler than body
- 1/8 inch long
- Has stinger
- Found along West Coast, Midwest, and Northwest USA, not in Southwest, Southeast, or Rockies
- Will eat almost anything, including pet food



Pharaoh Ants

- Two nodes
- Yellow-reddish body with black shading on the top rear of abdomen
- 1/16 - 1/12 inch long
- Has stinger
- Found across the US
- Will eat sweets and proteins
- Need lots of water to survive, know to be found near aquariums, pet water dishes, refrigerator condensation pans, and house plants

Shop for the same products pest professionals use forPharaoh Ant Control.



Thief Ants

- Two nodes
- Vary in color from pale yellow to light or dark brown
- 1/16 inch long
- Has very small stinger
- Found across the US
- Prefer high protein foods
- Will enter homes and structures during hot, dry weather



White-Footed Ants

- One node, hidden by abdomen
- Black with pale yellow or white at the end of their legs
- No stinger
- 1/8 inch long
- Found in Florida, Hawaii, and parts of California
- Prefer sweets

Get rid of ants with our ant control products, or click the right arrow below to read how to find ants on your property.

Still not sure what type of ants you have? Give our customer service team a call at 866-581-7378 or email support@domyown.com.