The Leaf Cutter Ant Identification Guide

What Do Leaf Cutter Ants Look Like?

By DoMyOwn staff



Leaf cutter ants, also known as parasol ants or cut ants, are a collective name of 47 different species of ants that chew through leaves in crops, trees, and plants. These ants don't actually eat the leaves, they instead use the leaves to grow and maintain the fungal garden that their larvae feed on.

Leaf cutter ants can quickly destroy vegetation and their mounds can overtake rural areas like farm and plains. Read below to learn more about what leafcutter ants look like.

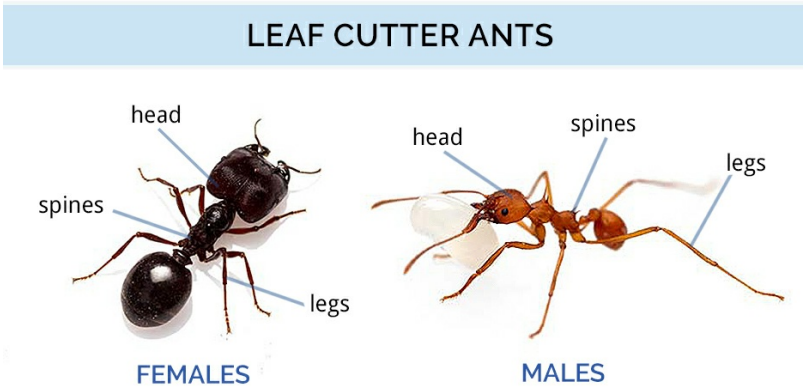
SIZE



Leaf cutter ants range in size.

Male worker leaf cutter ants are 1/16 - 1/2 inch long while female queens are larger, growing up to 3/4 inch long.

SHAPE



Leaf cutter ants can be divided into two sub-species, atta and acromymex.

Atta leaf cutter ants have a thorax or body that is comprised of three spines and a smooth exoskeleton on their upper thorax.

Acromymex leaf cutter ants have a thorax with four spines and a rough exoskeleton.

Female (queen) leaf cutter ants have larger heads than males. Males have very thin, long legs compared to their body size while females have legs that are proportional to their bodies.

Both males and females can grow wings during their lifetime. These wings will fall off after the ants participate in a "nuptial" flight, where the ants will mate.

Keep in mind, leaf cutters can be referred to by many different names. For instance, in Texas leaf cutter ants are known as Texas leaf cutters or atta texana ants.

PRO TIP

Leaf cutter ants share many characteristics with other ants. If you believe you may be dealing with another type of ant, visit our Ant Identification Guide to determine which ant species you have and how to treat the infestation.

COLOR

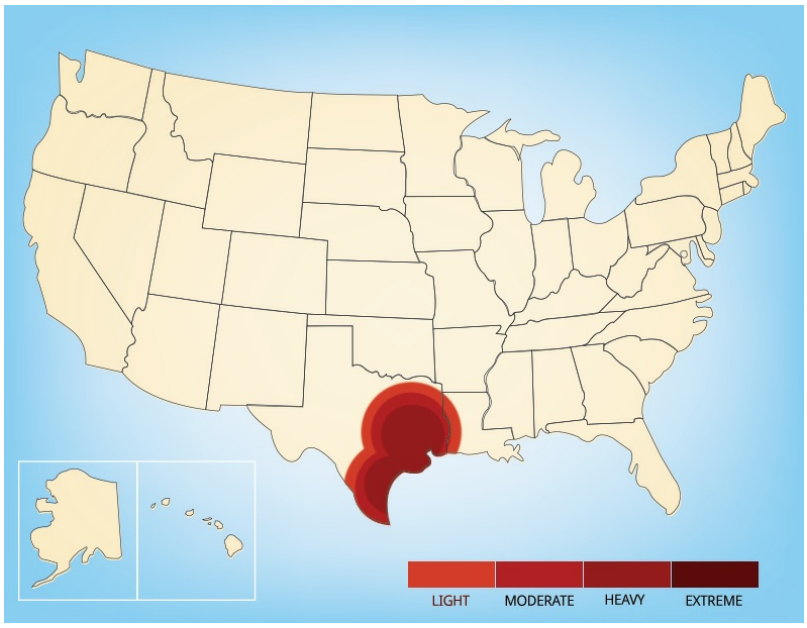


Leaf cutter ants range from a rusty red to a dark brown in color. When the ants have wings, their long wings are smoky brown or black.

LARVAE

The larvae of leaf cutter ants are cream colored and range from 1/4 - 1/2 inch long. It is rare to see this larvae in person as they are often growing below ground in the ant mounds.

LOCATION



Leafcutter ants are found in eastern and central Texas and western Louisiana. They can also be found in Southern and Central America.

The ants prefer large, open spaces in rural, agricultural areas. This gives them plenty of room to create their large nests. Leaf cutter ants are not found in cities or suburbs.

If you suspect you have leaf cutter ants, click the right arrow below to read more about the damage leaf cutter ants cause and how to identify their mounds in our guide on where to find leaf cutter ants.