



## Pacific Pests, Pathogens & Weeds - Mini Fact Sheet Edition

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### Little fire ant (182)

Relates to: **Ants**



Photo 1. Little fire ant worker, *Wasmannia auropunctata*.



Photo 2. Workers of little fire ant, *Wasmannia auropunctata*, at a peanut butter bait.



Photo 3. Adult little fire ant, *Wasmannia auropunctata*, showing its anatomy.



Photo 4. Close-up of head and antennae of the little fire ant, *Wasmannia auropunctata*; the antennae have two sections at the end (see Diagram 2).

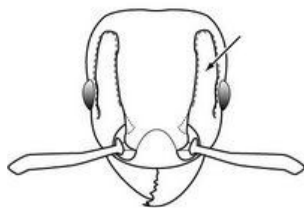


Diagram 1. Head of the little fire ant, *Wasmannia auropunctata*, showing the scrobe (arrowed), the area from the base of the antenna to the back of the head. Compare with Photo 4.

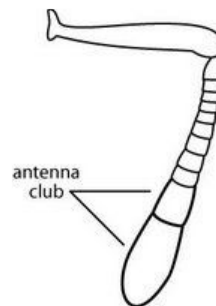


Diagram 2. Structure of an antenna of the little fire ant, *Wasmannia auropunctata*. Compare with Photo 4.

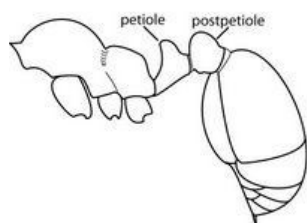


Diagram 3. Mid-section of the little fire ant, *Wasmannia auropunctata*. Compare with Photo 3.

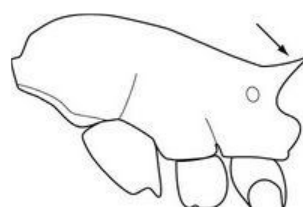


Diagram 4. Propodeal spines of the little fire ant, *Wasmannia auropunctata*. Compare with Photo 3.

## Summary

- Worldwide distribution. A major pest; it forms supercolonies.
- Golden brown, 1.5 mm with painful sting. Nests under leaf litter, wood, in tree forks, with queens, workers, pupae and eggs. Eats many kinds of foods, and that is part of its success. A problem for workers in food gardens and plantations.
- Spreads in floating debris, in soil, and in the plant and log trades.
- Biosecurity: define risk, and have rapid response plan should an introduction occur.
- Chemical control: three types are used: (i) stomach poisons; (ii) growth regulators; (iii) neurotoxins. See IUCN/SSC website for details of eradication and management.

## Common Name

Little fire ant, electric ant

## Scientific Name

*Wasmannia auropunctata*

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<sup>1</sup>International Union for Conservation of Nature/Species Survival Commission. Information, photos (and Diagrams) *Wasmannia auropunctata* (PIAkey - identification guide to invasive ants of the Pacific islands. (<http://itp.lucidcentral.org/id/ant/pia/index.html>); and from Electric ant. Wikipedia. ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electric\\_ant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electric_ant)).

Produced with support from the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research under project PC/2010/090: *Strengthening integrated crop management research in the Pacific Islands in support of sustainable intensification of high-value crop production*, implemented by the University of Queensland and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

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