

Pacific Pests, Pathogens & Weeds - Mini Fact Sheet Edition

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Tropical fire ant (362)

Relates to: Ants



Photo 1. Small worker, Solenopsis geminata, side view.



Photo 2. Small worker, *Solenopsis geminata*, front of

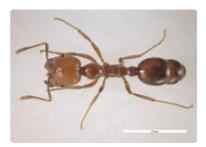


Photo 3. Large worker, $Solenopsis\ geminata$, showing large, squarish head.



Photo 4. Large worker, *Solenopsis geminata*, side view of head



Photo 5. Queen, Solenopsis geminata, with wings

Summary

- Worldwide distribution. Common in many Pacific island countries. Ground-nesting in sunny
 agricultural, forestry, grassland areas. Aggressive, painful sting. Among world's 100 worse invasive species.
- Nests slightly raised mounds, radiating below surface. Many hundreds per ha. Eats seeds, other insects, reptiles, amphibians, honeydew.
- Direct damage to seeds, plant parts, hoses, loss of biodiversity; indirectly by defending aphids, mealybugs, scales and whiteflies from natural enemies.
- Queens, males and three types of worker: minor, major and intermediate, that have changing tasks. Nests mostly with many queens, some single.
- $\bullet \ \ Tramp\ ant.\ Spread\ by\ queens\ leaving\ the\ nest,\ nuptial\ flight\ then\ new\ site,\ or\ budding;\ spread\ with\ trade\ in\ horticultural.$
- Biosecurity: requires risk assessments, regulations preventing introduction, protocols in case of breaches, and ability to make rapid response. Pacific Ant Prevention Plan available (IUCN/SSC Invasive Specialist Group).

- Cultural control: hot water at 47°C kills ants; over 49°C kills plants.
- Chemical control: use i) stomach poisons (fibronil, Amdro borax), ii) growth regulators (methoprene, pyriproxyfen), iii) nerve poisons (bifenthrin, fipronil, imidacloprid). See (http://piat.org.nz/getting-rid-of-ants).

Common Name

Tropical fire ant, tropical red fire ant, ginger ant, red ant.

Scientific Name

Solenopsis geminata

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Information from CABI Solenopsis geminata (tropical fire ant) (2017) Crop Protection Compendium. (www.cabi.org/cpc); and Pacific Invasive Ant Toolkit. (http://www.pait.org.nz/problem-ants/common-invasive-ants/tropical-fire-ant); and Selonopsis geminata. AntWik. (http://www.antwiki.org/wiki/Solenopsis_geminata); and AntWeb. (https://www.antweb.org/description.do?genus=solenopsis&species=geminata&rank=species); and from Solenopsis geminata (2018) Global Invasive Species Database.(http://www.incngisd.org/gisd/speciesname/Solenopsis+geminata). Photo 1 Simon Hinkley & Ken Walker (2001) Tropical fire ant (Solenopsis geminata). Museum of Victoria. PaDIL - (http://www.padil.gov.au). Photos 2-5 Tracy Smith (2005) Tropical fire ant (Solenopsis geminata). Department of Agriculture Western Australia. PaDIL - (http://www.padil.gov.a.u).

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This mini fact sheet is a part of the app Pacific Pests, Pathogens & Weeds

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