



Pacific Pests, Pathogens & Weeds - Mini Fact Sheet Edition

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White-footed ant (360)

Relates to: [Ants](#)



Photo 1. White-footed ant, *Technomyrmex* species, tending an infestation of *Icerya seychellarum* on avocado for their honeydew.



Photo 2. White-footed ant, *Technomyrmex* species, tending an infestation of mealybugs on noni (*Morinda citrifolia*) for their honeydew.



Photo 3. White-footed ant, *Technomyrmex albipes*, side view.



Photo 4. White-footed ant, *Technomyrmex albipes*, from above.



Photo 5. White-footed ant, *Technomyrmex albipes*; view of head.

Summary

- Worldwide distribution. Three similar white-footed species, needing specialist identification. Common in Pacific island countries.
- Tent-like nest of debris on ground, in trees, in houses. Do not bite humans.
- Males, winged and wingless; three kinds females (queens, workers, intercastes). Queens establish colony, reproductive intercastes later take over. Eats living/dead insects, and honeydew.
- Damage to plants indirect: protect natural enemies from attacking aphids, mealybugs, scales, whiteflies.
- Tramp ant; spread by 'budding' - intercastes leave nest with workers, males and brood; spread with international trade.
- 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 (fipronil, Amdro borax), ii) growth regulators (methoprene, pyriproxyfen), iii) nerve poisons (bifenthrin, fipronil, imidacloprid). See (<http://piat.org.nz/getting-rid-of-ants>).

Common Name

White-footed ant; white-footed house ant.

Scientific Name

Technomyrmex albipes. Identification of the ant requires expert examination as there are several other species that are similar. Many specimens previously identified as *Technomyrmex albipes* have subsequently been reidentified as *Technomyrmex difficilis* (difficult white-footed ant) or as *Technomyrmex vitiensis* (Fijian white-footed ant), which also occurs worldwide.

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Information from *Technomyrmex albipes*. Wikipedia. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technomyrmex_albipes); and *Technomyrmex difficilis* (= *albipes*) Entomology & Nematology. UF/IFAS, University of Florida (http://entnemdept.ufl.edu/creatures/urban/ants/white-footed_ant.htm); and Pacific Invasive Ant Toolkit. (<http://www.piat.org.nz/problem-ants/common-invasive-ants/white-footed-ants>); and *Technomyrmex albipes*. AntWiki. (http://www.antwiki.org/wiki/Technomyrmex_albipes); and from *Technomyrmex albipes* (2018) Global Invasive Species Database. (<http://www.iucn.org/gisdb/speciesname/Technomyrmex+albipes>). Photos 1&2 Randolph Thaman, University of the South Pacific, Fiji. Photos 3-5 April Noble from Antweb. (<https://www.antweb.org/bigPicture.do?name=casent0178469&number=1&shot=p>).

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