

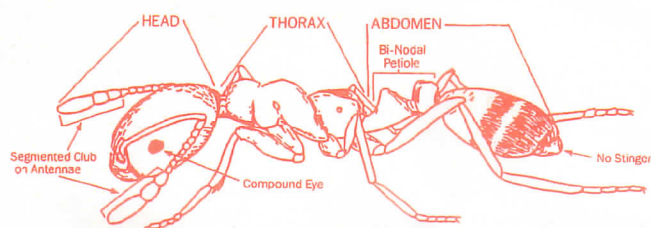
PEST ALERT

PHARAOH ANTS



The Pharaoh Ant (*Monomorium pharaonis*) is a tiny ant about 1/10 to 1/16 inch long that nests in warm inaccessible places in buildings. It is not native to North America, being an African species imported around 100 years ago. It can only live outdoors in the southern areas of North America; its name is derived from the belief that it was one of the biblical seven plagues of Egypt.

It is found mostly in larger towns and cities, and can become a major pest in apartment buildings, hospitals,



numerous other places in buildings. Pharaoh Ants prefer areas with a temperature around 80F and a relative humidity of about 80%. Foraging workers may travel over 100 feet for food.

Reproduction: Colony budding or fission - the multiplication of colonies by the departure of one or more reproductive forms, accompanied by groups of workers, from the parental nest while leaving behind comparable units to perpetuate the "parental" colony; because of this phenomenon several colonies often exist at the same time in a building. Colonies may vary in size from one queen and a small number of workers up to hundreds of queens and tens of thousands of workers.

CONTROL

Pharaoh Ant control has typically been based on the spraying of insecticides around areas where Ants have been seen and/or dusting in wall voids and behind electrical switch plates with insecticidal dusts. Although such methods may kill off the 5-10% of the Ants which leave the nest looking for food and water, they do not usually result in colony elimination. Furthermore, Pharaoh Ant colonies will often become alarmed when treatment occurs and will split their colony into smaller units. This activity worsens the situation.

Whilst spraying and/or dusting may result in eliminating an Ant colony, it usually requires extensive use of pesticides and is a very expensive treatment. Extensive pesticide use can also result in contamination of sensitive equipment in hospitals and laboratories.

Effective Pharaoh Ant control utilizes an integrated approach, with focus on baits containing chemicals which are essentially safe for humans and with latent toxicity for Ants. With baiting, proper placement of the bait will result in effective Ant control, however attention must be paid to detail to ensure Ant elimination - checking for Ant activity and placing baits in correct situations.

Along with correct bait placement it is essential that highest level of sanitation be maintained, Ants must not be distracted from the bait by other food sources - such as crumbs, spillages, dirty dishes, etc.

nursing homes, groceries and other buildings. The Pharaoh Ant is one of the very few "household ants" that is active year round in heated buildings.

DESCRIPTION

Color: Worker Ants are reddish-yellow, the queen is usually darker red and males are black.

Key Characteristics: Small size with 3 segmented club on antennae, well-developed eyes, a bi-nodal petiole (narrow waist between thorax and abdomen) and no stinger present.

Food: Omnivorous, feeding generally on animal or vegetable food, dead insects, small animals, open wounds, shed human skin on bedding, sucrose and IV solutions, sweets and fats.

Pest status: In hospitals and rest homes the Ants may enter baby cribs, burn units, IV sets, patient beds, surgical wounds. Strong circumstantial evidence exists (Beatson, S.H., 1972. Pharaoh Ants and pathogen vectors in hospitals, *Lancet*, Feb., pp.425-427) to show that these Ants mechanically vector important bacteria.

Habits: Typically nests indoors inside electrical conduits, in linen closets, in sterile surgical packets, under flower pots, within walls of buildings, near water sources and in