

Funding boost to stamp out tramp ants

Invasive ants or 'tramp ants' are on the hit list in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area with a funding boost from the Commonwealth Government for their detection and control.



Yellow crazy ants farming scale insects on sugarcane

Minister for the Environment, Tony Burke has allocated \$268,000 in funds through the Commonwealth's Caring for our Country program. The successful grant was submitted by the Wet Tropics Management Authority.

Wet Tropics executive director Andrew Maclean said the funding has allowed for important surveillance and detection to progress on the ground.

"Tramp ants were identified as a major biosecurity risk to the World Heritage Area in our State of the Wet Tropics Report last year. We are elated that the Commonwealth Government has recognised this, and now we can take a more proactive approach in their identification and eradication," Mr Maclean said.

Electric ants and yellow crazy ants, are listed among the world's 100 most invasive species. They, and several other species of invasive ants, are collectively known as tramp ants because of their ability to spread via cargo transported by humans.

They can cause a decline in diversity and abundance of plants and animals due to predation and competition and have a severe impact on the health and function of ecosystems in affected areas.

Within the World Heritage Area, cassowaries, spotted-tailed quolls, and other ground-dwelling and nesting species are particularly at risk.

"We are particularly concerned about the recent detection of yellow crazy ants in the World Heritage Area near Edmonton, after their relocation via cyclone debris in 2011. The arrival of electric ants in Brinsmead through human transportation also highlights the need for increased surveillance," Mr Maclean added.

"We will be working with our partners, Biosecurity Queensland and Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA), to begin intense surveillance along the boundary of the

World Heritage Area between Palm Cove and Edmonton, and around Bingil Bay, to target these destructive pests.”

Regional Manager of Conservation Volunteers Australia, Alice Crabtree, said that CVA was delighted to be able to collaborate with WTMA and Biosecurity Queensland in stamping out tramp ants in the Wet Tropics.

“This funding will enable us to employ team leaders to train and supervise volunteer surveillance teams to search for tramp ants, educate the community about the harm they can do to wildlife, pets, and rural livelihoods. We will be teaching the general public how to identify and report tramp ants. We are keen to work with Biosecurity Queensland and look forward to continuing this collaboration between government and community to help keep the Wet Tropics special,” she said.

You can help. Check your garden, business, park, local playground and even inside your home regularly. Report any suspect ants to Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23 or collect a sample and send it to us for identification.

