



School far from yellow in crazy ant war

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EDMONTON school students have joined the fight against an invasive pest that threatens their school grounds and the wider Cairns region.

The Wet Tropics Management Authority yesterday hosted a stall at Isabella State's community expo where kids learned about yellow crazy ants.

They left armed with magnifying glasses to help them identify infestations and report them to the WTMA, which is spearheading an eradication program.

Yellow crazy ants are one of the world's 100 most invasive species and have spread to 700ha in Edmonton, Bentley Park and Mount Peter.

WTMA planning and conservation manager Max

Chappell said a creek near the school was infested.

"One of the reasons we're at the expo is to make local families and students aware of the problem that we need to tackle together," he said.

"They would cause a disturbance to outdoor activities if they spread to school grounds and reached large numbers.

"Yellow crazy ants pose a

risk not only to biodiversity, they can also have an impact on our outdoor living.

"They spray formic acid which can cause severe burns and even blindness."

Mr Chappell urged residents living in infested areas to only dump rubbish at council transfer stations and construction workers to seek advice from the WTMA on how to avoid spreading ants.



UPPING THE ANTE: Isabella State School's Mitchell Cooper learns about yellow crazy ants at the stall.

Picture: STEWART McLEAN