

STAMP OUT

Tramp Ants

Yellow crazy ant eradication



What you need to know

Yellow crazy ant infestation

Yellow crazy ants (YCA) have infested the area where you live.

They look like **this** and can be identified by their yellow-brown colour and crazy, frantic movements.



Actual size

Yellow crazy ants are a declared Class 1 pest under the *Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002*, and the Commonwealth Government is funding a treatment program to eradicate them from the Wet Tropics region.

The Wet Tropics Management Authority is coordinating the eradication program and seeks your cooperation to implement this first round of treatment.

We ask that you allow access to treat your yard during the month of May 2014.

Safeway Pest Control will conduct ground-baiting treatments and require your consent to enter and treat your property for YCA. Please read this document and fill in the attached consent form (if you have not already done so).

Are the ants dangerous?

The ants can be painful and dangerous to people and animals. They don't sting or bite but spray formic acid when disturbed and it can be particularly painful if there is contact with the eyes.

What can I do to help?

We need your cooperation

- to allow **Safeway Pest Control** to enter your property – please fill out the attached consent form
- to allow the bait to be collected by the ants before it degrades after a day or two
- to prevent spreading yellow crazy ants outside of your property, do not move soil, vegetation or timber
- to stop treating your yard so that our treatments have maximum effect.

What are my legal responsibilities?

By law it is an offence to introduce, keep, release or move a declared Class 1 pest, other than under a declared pest permit. The legislation also requires landowners to take reasonable steps to keep their land free of this pest. This project assists you to meet that responsibility.

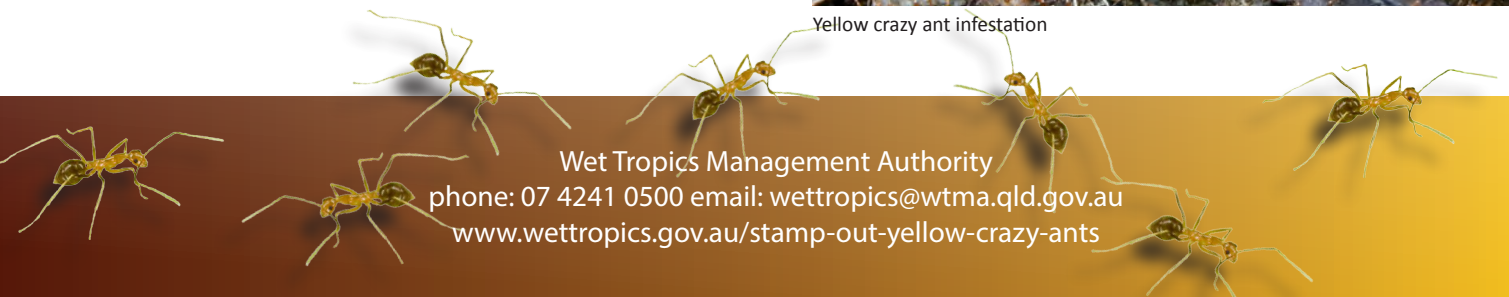
Where can I get more information?

- read the Frequently Asked Questions (attached)
- ask the Safeway Pest Control treatment team when they come to visit
- see the Authority's website at www.wettropics.gov.au/stamp-out-yellow-crazy-ants.html
- phone the Authority on 4241 0500.



Yellow crazy ant infestation

Biosecurity Qld



Wet Tropics Management Authority
phone: 07 4241 0500 email: wettropics@wtma.qld.gov.au
www.wettropics.gov.au/stamp-out-yellow-crazy-ants

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FAQs

Why am I receiving this yellow crazy ant notification?

Yellow crazy ants are a Class 1 declared pest and have been found on your property or close to your property. The Wet Tropics Management Authority is managing a five-year program aimed at eradicating these YCA infestations from your area. We are seeking your cooperation to allow us to treat your property with insecticide.

Where are the areas that need treatment?

There are about 500 properties in and around Mt Peter and Bentley Park that are within the treatment area of 600 hectares. There is also a smaller infestation of about 27 hectares at Russett Park near Kuranda.

What do yellow crazy ants look like?

Adult yellow crazy ants are yellowish-tan or orange-yellow with a brown abdomen (sometimes striped), about 5mm in length, with very long legs and antennae and a long slender body. They are half the size of the common green ant and have erratic, frantic, "crazy" movement. Any ants that are black, dark brown or dark red are unlikely to be crazy ants.

Yellow crazy ants attacking native insect



R. Richardson

Where do yellow crazy ants make their nests?

Yellow crazy ants nest on the ground in soil and prefer areas with access to water or some moisture. They nest in and below woody debris and rocks, at the bases of trees, or underneath leaf litter. In suburban areas, they have been found in rock walls, pool filters, garden beds, mulch, baled hay, plant pots, fence lines and carports.

What is a yellow crazy ant and why are they so bad?

Yellow crazy ants are one of the **world's 100 worst invasive species**. These ants have multiple queens and can form densely populated super-colonies. These super-colonies have a huge impact on our natural environment, including native animals and plants that live in the nearby Wet Tropics World Heritage rainforests. Not only that, **they will impact on your lifestyle if they haven't already.**

How can they impact on my lifestyle?

Unlike other ants that bite or sting, yellow crazy ants spray formic acid to defend themselves or subdue prey. This can be a danger to your family and pets.

The acid can burn or irritate broken skin and can cause temporary blindness if sprayed in the eyes. At high densities YCA invade houses, patios and children's play equipment looking for food and nesting sites. As the density of ant numbers increases, this can restrict the ability of residents, and particularly children, to use and enjoy their homes and play areas.

What kind of insecticide will be used on my property?

The bait being used this round of treatment is called 'Engage'. The active ingredient in Engage is S-methoprene. S-methoprene has been extensively tested with many kinds of organisms. The methoprenes are not harmful to birds or mammals (including humans), but can be somewhat toxic to some fish and aquatic invertebrates. Risk assessments show that the concentrations of active ingredient in aquatic environments, if the products are used according to label directions, should be well below the levels that are harmful in laboratory toxicity tests.

How does it work?

S-methoprene is an Insect Growth Regulator (IGR). IGRs are chemicals that inhibit the life cycle of an insect. Unlike classic insecticides, IGRs do not affect an insect's nervous system and are considered biochemical pesticides rather than toxins because rather than controlling target pests through direct toxicity, they interfere with an insect's life cycle and prevent it from reaching maturity or reproducing. Methoprene is effective in preventing queens from laying viable eggs and preventing metamorphosis of larvae of new workers and reproductives. Eventually the colony collapses as worker ants are not replaced.

How, where and when will the bait be applied?

Engage is being spread by hand at Russett Park and waterways will be avoided. A qualified pest technician from **Safeway Pest Control** will apply the granular bait using a hand spreader. It will only be applied to your yards. There is no need for the bait to be applied inside houses. It will not be applied to any swimming pools or any other water features. Baiting will commence in May 2014 and will take a week to treat Russett Park subject to weather.

How many times will my property need to be treated?

The Wet Tropics yellow crazy ant eradication program is a five-year program involving three rounds of treatment each year for three years (approximately three months apart) at critical stages in the ants' life cycle. This means we will be seeking access to treat your property a total of nine times.

What you need to do

Sign the enclosed consent form and return it to the Wet Tropics Management Authority.

After treatments please don't water or hose treated areas within 24 hours as moisture can diminish bait effectiveness.

Dumping vegetation waste spreads yellow crazy ants, take it to the rubbish tip.



Do I need to be at home during the treatment?

After you have given consent there is no need for you to be home when **Safeway Pest Control** comes to treat your property, so long as all your yard areas are accessible. Safeway Pest Control will leave a 'calling card' to advise you when your property was treated.

If you need to be home to provide access, please state this on the consent form with your contact details.

Should I also be treating my house and yard while eradication efforts are happening?

Please restrict your treatment to using surface spray around doorways and window frames to prevent ants entering your house. Do not treat your garden or nature strip as this will reduce the number of worker ants available to take the *Engage* throughout the nest and to the queens.

What health and safety precautions do I need to know?

The yellow crazy ant bait treatments pose negligible risks to public health. As a precautionary measure, it is advised that you avoid direct contact with the bait. Do not undertake recreational activities within the treated area for at least 24 hours after treatment. Additionally, when mowing treated areas for the first time after treatment it is recommended that trousers, enclosed shoes and long sleeved shirt be worn.

What about my livestock/pets?

Engage is not harmful to livestock and domestic pets. However, it would be advisable to keep animals away from the baits for at least 24 hours while the bait remains active and ants are collecting it. If you have poultry they should be kept in cages while the bait is on the ground just in case they eat it. Methoprene can be toxic to some fish and aquatic organisms. So if you have a pond or water-feature containing fish or other aquatic animals, please advise Safeway Pest Control so special care can be taken to avoid treatment near these garden features.

How do the ants spread?

Yellow crazy ants are mostly spread when they hitch a ride with people in timber, soil, vegetation, garden waste, pot plants, building materials and earth moving equipment. They produce new queens during the wet season and spread out from the source colony by 'budding'. Yellow crazy ant infestations can move up to 1 metre a day.

Can I move anything containing yellow crazy ants?

No. A person must not spread yellow crazy ants in soil, garden waste or other high-risk materials such as timber. Do not move high-risk materials off your property until treatment is completed, including skip bins.

After this time, only dispose of vegetation, plants and soil at approved council sites, otherwise there is a high risk of spreading the infestations and compromising eradication efforts. You can help by not moving pot plants off your property, but if you are moving home, at the very least please spray your pots with surface spray insecticide beforehand.



The Kuranda Tree Frog

One threatened species is known to occur in the vicinity of the area proposed for treatment at Russett Park. It is the Kuranda Tree Frog (*Litoria myola*) and is listed as endangered and has a restricted distribution in and around the township of Kuranda and the nearby rural residential area of Russett Park.

Dr Conrad Hoskin of JCU is the researcher who originally discovered and described the Kuranda Tree Frog. The Authority has sought the advice of Dr Hoskin regarding measures that could be taken to avoid or reduce impacts on the Kuranda Tree Frog.

Dr Hoskin advised that September to March is the core activity period for the Kuranda Tree Frog in terms of: breeding and feeding in adults; and eggs and tadpoles in streams.

He also advised that the Kuranda Tree Frog live in trees away from streams during the rest of the year.

Avoiding impacts on the Kuranda Tree Frog

The area of yellow crazy ant infestation at Russett Park is only about 27 hectares and is accessible by foot which will allow for hand-based spreading.

As this baiting round will take place outside of the core activity period it means the frogs will be less active and living in trees, and therefore much less likely to be at risk from potential impact from baits applied to the ground.

Furthermore, treatments will not be taking place at the time of occurrence of tadpoles. It is therefore very unlikely the baiting will have a significant impact on the population.

Also note that tests by USA EPA investigating the effects of methoprene on various life stages of different amphibian species, no adverse effects were reported.

Where can I get more information?

Contact Lucy Karger or Max Chappell at the Wet Tropics Management Authority on 4241 0500 or the Authority's website on www.wettropics.gov.au/stamp-out-yellow-crazy-ants.html



Australian Government



Queensland Government