

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.

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.

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 spray formic acid when disturbed and it can be particularly painful if there is contact with the eyes.

Is the treatment dangerous to humans?

No. The baiting program uses low doses of Fipronil which is not considered hazardous to people and animals. However, as a precaution, landholders are advised to avoid contact with the bait for at least 24 hours so the ants can collect it and take it down into their nests before it degrades. Fipronil can affect some fish and aquatic organisms and should not be used in fishponds or streams.

What can I do to help?

We need your cooperation:

- to allow **Safeway Pest Control** to enter your property – please fill out the attached form
- to allow the baits to be collected by the ants before they degrade after a day or two
- to prevent movement of soil or vegetation which may contain crazy ants outside your property
- to stop treating your yard so that our treatments have maximum effect over the next three years.

What are my legal responsibilities?

By law it is an offence to introduce, feed, 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 eradication team when they come to visit
- see the Authority's website at www.wettropics.gov.au/stamp-out-tramp-ants.html
- phone the Authority on 4241 0500



Yellow crazy ant infestation

Biosecurity Qld



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FAQs



Why am I receiving this notification about yellow crazy ants?

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 20 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, "crazy" movement. Any ants that are black, dark brown or dark red are unlikely to be crazy ants.



R.Richardson

Yellow crazy ants attacking native insect

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 carparks.

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 ant bait being applied to properties is called 'AntOff'. It is granular bait that consists of a fishmeal-based ant attractant and an insecticide called 'Fipronil'. Fipronil is a broad-spectrum insecticide that is used in agricultural, residential and veterinary situations. It is used for the control of many domestic and agricultural insect pests including the control of termites, cockroaches and ants in residential and commercial buildings. In veterinary situations, Fipronil products are used as spray or concentrated spot-on formulations to control fleas and ticks that live on the skin of dogs and cats.

How, where and when will the bait be applied?

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 for a period of about four weeks. It will only take about 20 minutes to treat a standard house block.

How many times will my property need to be treated with insecticide?

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' lifecycle. This means we will be seeking access to treat your property a total of nine times. In parallel with the treatment of residential areas we will be undertaking aerial treatments with a helicopter over cane paddocks and about 20ha of the Wet Tropics World Heritage rainforest where the ants have invaded.

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





Aerial baiting of yellow crazy ants

What you need to do

Sign the enclosed consent form and give it to the YCA treatment team when they visit.

Note: The YCA treatment team will be a staff member from the Wet Tropics Management Authority, a Conservation Volunteer or a qualified pest technician from Safeway Pest Control.

After treatments please don't water or hose treated areas within 24 hours as moisture can diminish bait effectiveness or turn the bait mouldy and unattractive to ants.

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.

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 *AntOff* throughout the nest and to the queens.

What health and safety precautions do I need to know about?

The yellow crazy ant bait treatments pose negligible risks to public health. The low concentrations of fipronil used in *AntOff* and the low application rate make this product non-hazardous by Australian worksafe standards. However, as a precautionary measure, it is advised that you avoid direct contact with the bait and not undertake recreational activities within the treated area that may result in direct contact with the bait 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. Fipronil is not mutagenic (does not cause genetic changes) or teratogenic (does not cause birth defects). The Material Safety Data Sheet for AntOff can be viewed by visiting www.wettropics.gov.au/stamp-out-tramp-ants.html

What about my livestock / pets

Livestock and domestic pets are very unlikely to be harmed by the quantities of *AntOff* being applied. *AntOff* is non-toxic to earthworms. 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. They 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'. YCA 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, please spray your pots with surface spray insecticide beforehand.

Where can I get more information?

Contact Lucy Karger or Max Chappell at the Wet Tropics Management Authority on 42410500 or the Authority's website on www.wettropics.gov.au/stamp-out-tramp-ants.html



Formic acid burns from Yellow Crazy Ants

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