

Imported Fire Ants in LBL?

Imported fire ants (IFA) have recently begun to appear in the Land Between the Lakes and in parts of Calloway county, KY. Most of the mounds in the LBL have been on the TN side, but a few have been found on the KY side. IFA may look like ordinary ants but their behavior is anything but ordinary! IFA display an aggressive behavior and build mound shaped nests. The top of these mounds will have a freshly tilled appearance. Mounds are typically found in open areas such as lawns, pastures, farm fields and rights-of-ways. The ants are 1/8 to 1/4 inch in length and are reddish brown to black in color.

IFA are native to South America and were accidentally introduced into the US in the 1930's at the port of Mobile, AL. Since that time they have been expanding their range and have now spread into 13 states. Areas to the south of the LBL are already quarantined for IFA. We believe that IFA initially got to the LBL when the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers flooded which caused the ants to form a raft and float downstream to the LBL area. *Note: Both the Cumberland and Tennessee rivers flow from south to north in the LBL.*

Aggressive behavior

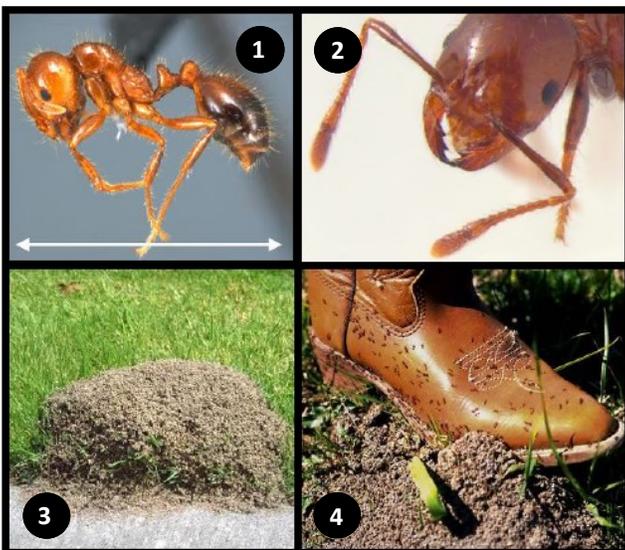
IFA attack anything that disturbs their mound. They rapidly swarm onto and repeatedly sting anything that disturbs their mound. When the ants come out of their mound, they do not come from a single hole; rather the entire mound seems to "boil" out ants. The sting from an IFA can cause severe pain, discomfort and reactions in allergic individuals. Within seconds of being stung, a red welt will form and will be accompanied by an intense burning pain at the site. The welt will turn into a blister which eventually turns into a white pustule. The pain and itching may last for several days before subsiding.

Effects on wildlife

IFA induced mortality on area-wide wildlife populations has been documented by scientific studies. IFA affect ground-nesting birds and reptiles during and soon after hatching. Deer are also vulnerable as fawns instinctively remain motionless in their hiding places. IFA will also attack hatching quail and ground-nesting waterfowl chicks.

What can you do?

If you think you have found an IFA mound, please note your location either with a GPS unit (latitude/longitude) or with a detailed map that includes a phone number and contact information. If you find



mounds in the LBL area, contact the Forest Service at (270) 924-2065. If mounds are found outside the LBL (in Kentucky) contact the KY Office of the State Entomologist at (859) 257-5838 or you may email information to Joe Collins at joe.collins@uky.edu
www.KyStateEnt.org
www.KY-CAPS.org

Pictures 1-4: <http://phc.amedd.army.mil/phc%20resource%20library/redimportedfireantjan2010.pdf>
Picture 5: Murray Blum, University of Georgia, www.insectimages.org

UK UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY
College of Agriculture

Department of Entomology