

15.16 LITTLE BLACK ANT

Scientific Name: *Monomorium minimum* (Buckley)

Family: Formicidae

Order: Hymenoptera

Status: Most important pest.

Distribution: No house is free from its presence. It is distributed world-wide especially in the tropical and sub-tropical humid climates.

Food: One of the commonest troublesome household pests as it feeds on almost every human food and possesses habit of making nests in cracks and crevices of walls, floors and building roofs.

DESCRIPTION OF STAGES

Adult: Workers are black, 1/10 to 1/12 inch in length, slender and shiny. Queen is dark brown to black and 4 mm in length. Male is winged and workers are wingless.

Eggs: The eggs are oval in shape. A queen lays thousands of eggs in her life @ 7 to 22 eggs per day.

Larva: Larvae are legless and vermiform. Sexually female larvae are spherical and hairy. Queen larvae are whitish in colour.

Pupa: Larvae pupate prematurely with different shapes. Pupal development takes place in 22 days.

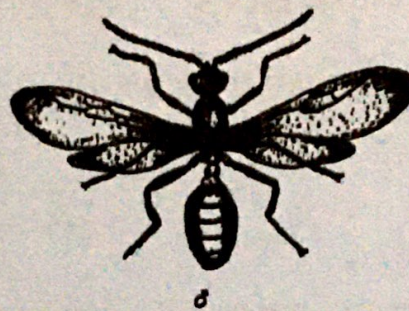
LIFE HISTORY

Ants are social insects. Each colony consists of three castes i.e. queen, workers and males. Wingless workers are modified sterile females. The winged male and female (young queen) swarm out in certain seasons (e.g. monsoon). They mate in the air. Mating flight is seen from June

to August. The males may or may not die after mating but the queens descend, shed their wings and start making a small nest at a suitable site.

When a cavity of a site is complete, the queen seals its opening and isolates herself till eggs of her ovaries are mature. Then eggs are laid which are hatched into white legless baby grubs. The queen feeds the grubs by her salivary secretions. When grubs are full-fed they pupate and then give rise to first batch of workers. They open the entrance and start supply of food from outside. This process may take several months. Due to better feeding the adults of subsequent generations are large in size. Additional chambers are added as the colony increases in size and this may take several years to establish a colony. Such established colony survives for several years as the adults live a long life while a queen may live up to 15 years.

A typical colony consists of one to several queens and thousands of workers. The colony is cared by the workers. From eggs, larvae are hatched to develop workers. However, certain winged male and females are also produced.



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Monomorium minimum (Buckley)
(Formicidae: Hymenoptera)

MODE OF DAMAGE

1. Damage is done by the workers only.
2. Workers remove almost every edible thing but they prefer sweets and fats.
3. Workers may also remove grains, other seeds from the stores as well as wood-works.
4. They make holes in the floor or roof resulting leakage in rainy season.

NON-CHEMICAL CONTROL

1. All cracks and crevices in a house should be closed so that the ants may not enter and make nest.
2. Ant-proof containers should be used for storage of food or grains.
3. Legs of containers should be dipped in the dishes containing water to avoid their attack.
4. The only sure method of control is to locate the colony and kill the queen by any of the following methods given under Chemical control. It is easy to locate a nest as they form ant-hills by throwing out bits of earths during building nest in the ground.

CHEMICAL CONTROL

1. The injection of kerosene oil with the help of a medical syringe on the entry points of the colony is highly effective for the control of this pest. Even the application of kerosene oil on the runways of the pest is also effective.
2. Pour 10-15 litres of chlorpyrifos 0.5 % into centre of colony through its entrance.
3. Apply dichlorvos (Thunder/Vapona) at the entry points of the colony.
4. Pyrethroids (such as permethrin and cypermethrin etc.) in 0.1 to 0.5% concentrations as dust, mats/coils and aerosol sprays can also be used for the control of this household pest insect.

15.17 SMALL RED HOUSE ANT

Scientific Name: *Dorylus labiatus* Shuckard
Family: Formicidae
Order: Hymenoptera

Life history, details and control is the same as under little black ant.

15.18 LARGE BLACK ANT

It is also known as **Black carpenter ant.**

Scientific Name: *Componotus compressus* (Fabricius)
Family: Formicidae
Order: Hymenoptera

Status: Most important pest.
Distribution: No house free from its presence.

DESCRIPTION OF STAGES

Adult: It is polymorphic with prominent head and thorax. It has slender waist, large

abdomen, clear wings and no enlarged terminal segment.

Eggs: The eggs are microscopic mostly and hatch earlier in warm season.

Larva: Legless and vermiform.

Pupa: Pupae are enclosed in cocoons.

LIFE HISTORY

Winged sexual forms are produced by mature colonies in the month of July. There are two generations of workers in a year. The queen usually lays eggs throughout the year. It can live for 8-15 or up to 60 years. Mating takes place in rainy season. After mating male dies and leaves the female to develop a colony.

MODE OF DAMAGE

Once a common house infesting species such as Black ants enter into houses in search of food, they become a source of annoyance, damage to fabrics and paper products. Its economic importance is due to their nesting in lawns, wood works and building foundations as well as feeding on foodstuffs. They are general in food habit as they can take sweet, honey dews, fruits, vegetables or meats.

CONTROL

Same as in the case of little black ant.