

Large Yellow Ant



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The large yellow ant, *Acanthomyops interjectus*, is a ground-nesting ant that does not infest houses. During swarming times, though, the brown, winged reproductive ants often end up indoors. It's who they look like, not what they do, that causes panic—yellow ant swarmers bear a definite resemblance to termites.

Identification

The large yellow ant workers are 1/4-inch long and bright yellow. Although they forage at night and are not often seen outside the nest, the worker ants are easily identified by this characteristic yellow color and by their odor, which smells like lemon. The winged reproductive ants are 3/8-inch long and dark brown. Winged ants also have a lemony odor. This species is sometimes called the “citronella ant” because of its odor.

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Biology and Habits

Like all ants, large yellow ants are social insects. They live in colonies made up of a queen plus workers and immature stages. Yellow ants feed on the honeydew produced by aphids and mealybugs.

Colonies of the large yellow ant are located in the soil, often under logs, rocks, or concrete slabs. The workers mound up large quantities of soil as

they construct their nests. Seeing these large soil mounds around the foundations of buildings or in crawl spaces can be quite distressing.

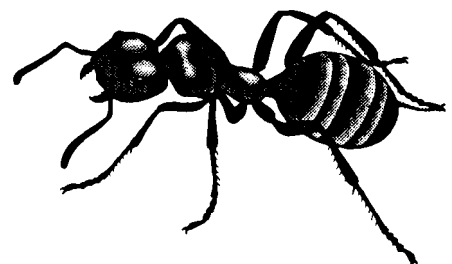
The winged reproductive stages of this ant, both males and females, swarm August through October. If the nest happens to be located under a basement slab or in a crawl space, the ants may swarm through cracks and crevices in the basement floor or foundation blocks and end up inside the house.

Prevention Methods

Discourage yellow ants from nesting near your house by removing logs, rocks, and other items that are close to the foundation or in the crawl space. If the ants are still a problem, establishing a 2-foot wide, vegetation-free zone or band of gravel around the house should keep the ants from nesting next to the foundation.

Control Strategies

Many times, control of these ants is not necessary. Winged ants can be removed from indoors with a vacuum cleaner. If a colony must be removed from a crawl space or near a foundation, you must first locate the nest. Inspect areas



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under logs, rocks, and landscape timbers. Apply a less toxic insecticide dust, such as boric acid, diatomaceous earth, or silica gel, to the nest with a bulb duster or power duster. Be sure to read and follow label directions and to wear a mask to avoid breathing the dust. Baits are not effective in controlling the large yellow ant.

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