



**Argentine ant**  
(*Linepithema humile*)

**Food:** sweets, sometimes proteins

**Nest:** outdoors in shallow mounds.

**Physical description:** 1/8 inch, dull brown



**Pharaoh ant**

(*Monomorium pharaonis*)

**Food:** fats, proteins, sweets

**Nest:** in wall or cabinet voids, behind baseboards or insulation, or outdoors in debris

**Physical description:** 1/16 inch, yellow or honey-colored to orange



### Odorous house ant

*(Tapinoma sessile)*

**Food:** sweets, sometimes proteins.

**Nest:** in shallow mounds in soil or debris or indoors in wall voids or around water pipes or heaters

**Physical description:** 1/8 inch, dark brown to shiny black, very strong odor when crushed



### Pavement ant

*(Tetramorium caespitum)*

**Food:** sweets, proteins, grease

**Nest:** in lawns or under stones or boards; builds mounds along sidewalks and foundations or near water

**Physical description:** 3/16 inch, dark brown to black

## LIFE CYCLE AND HABITS

Ants usually nest in soil; nest sites vary with species but are often found next to buildings, along sidewalks, or in close proximity to food sources such as trees or plants that harbor honeydew-producing insects. Ants also construct nests under boards, stones, tree stumps, or plants and sometimes under buildings or other protected places. The primary ant that nests indoors is the Pharaoh ant. In temperate climates, this species nests in warm, moist locations such as inside wall voids, under flooring, or near hot water pipes or heating systems, but is also found nesting outdoors in warmer parts.

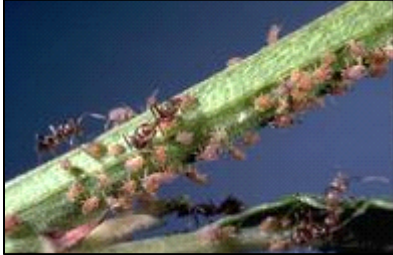
Food preferences vary among ant species but may include fruits, seeds, nuts, fatty substances, dead or live insects, dead animals, and sweets. Ants often enter buildings seeking food and water, warmth and shelter, or refuge from dry, hot weather or flooded conditions. They may appear suddenly in buildings if other food sources become unavailable or weather conditions change.

Although there is some variation among species, a single newly mated queen typically establishes a new colony. After weeks or months of confinement underground, she lays her first eggs. After the eggs hatch, she feeds the white, legless larvae with her own metabolized wing muscles and fat bodies until the larvae pupate.

Several weeks later, the pupae transform into sterile female adult workers, and the first workers dig their way out of the nest to collect food for themselves, the queen (who continues to lay eggs), and subsequent broods of larvae. As numbers increase, workers add new chambers and galleries to the nest. After a few years, the colony begins to produce winged male and female ants, which leave the nest to mate and form new colonies.

Argentine ants differ from most other ant species in that their nests are often shallow, extending just below the soil surface. However, under dry conditions they will nest deeper in the soil. In addition, Argentine ant colonies aren't separate but linked to form one large "supercolony" with multiple queens. When newly mated queens disperse to found new colonies, they are accompanied by workers rather than going out on their own as most other species do.

## **DAMAGE**



### **Argentine ants tending aphids on ceanothus.**

Inside buildings, household ants feed on sugar, syrup, honey, fruit juice, fats, and meat. Long trails of thousands of ants may lead from nests to food sources, causing considerable concern among building occupants. Outdoors ants are attracted to honeydew that soft scales, mealybugs, and aphids produce.

This liquid excrement contains sugars and other nutrients. Frequently outbreaks of scales and aphids occur when ants tend them for honeydew, because the ants protect scales and aphids from their natural enemies.

### **Ants can bite with their pincerlike jaws, although most species rarely do.**