

## Argentine Ants



Argentine ants are a common household pest, often entering structures in search of food or water (particularly during dry or hot weather), or to escape flooded nests during periods of heavy rainfall. Argentine ant colonies almost invariably have many reproductive queens, as many as eight for every 1,000 workers, so eliminating a single queen does not stop the colony's ability to breed. When they invade a kitchen, it is not uncommon to see two or three queens foraging along with the workers.

The worker ants are only about 3 mm (1/8th inch) long and can easily squeeze through cracks and holes no more than 1 mm (0.040 inch) in size. Queens are two to four times the length of workers. These tiny ants will set up quarters in the ground, in cracks in concrete walls, in spaces between boards and timbers, even among belongings in human dwellings.

Argentine ants also cause problems in agricultural areas by protecting plant pests, such as aphids and scale insects, from predators and parasitoids. In return for this protection, the ants receive a sweet excretion, known as "honeydew".



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