

## Pest Profile



**Photo credit:** Lucinda Gibson, California Academy of Sciences  
(Specimen ANTWEB 1008691 from <https://www.antweb.org>)

**Common Name:** Crazy ant (sugar ants; longhorned crazy ant; black crazy ant)

**Scientific Name:** *Paratrechina longicornis*

**Order and Family:** Order Hymenoptera; Family Formicidae

**Size and Appearance:**

	Length (mm)	Appearance
<b>Egg</b>		
<b>Larva/Nymph</b>		
<b>Adult</b>	Workers range from 2.3 to 2.9 mm	Workers are dark brown to black with a bluish iridescence. The body is covered with scattered, gray or white, coarse hairs (setae). They have long, 12-segmented antennae, large eyes, and long legs. These ants have a one-part waist and no stinger.  The colonies have multiple queens (polygynous), perhaps up to 40 queens.
<b>Pupa (if applicable)</b>		

**Type of feeder (Chewing, sucking, etc.):** Chewing

**Host(s):** Crazy ants feed on the honeydew of aphids and scale insects, which feed on plant juices, as well as on fruits, seeds, and plant exudates from a variety of plants. They also feed on dead and live insects and household foods, especially sweets.

**Description of Damage (larvae and adults):**

This species is a major household pest. They are omnivorous and forage as generalized scavengers. Hence, they may feed on a number of household foods, especially sweets. They nest in lawns, mulch, potted plants, trash, rotten wood, in vegetation adjacent to foundations, in walls, under carpet, and in cracks in masonry. Because these ants are adapted to human disturbance and activity, they are easily transported by humans.

These ants can be a significant agricultural pest by distributing and tending a number of scale insects, aphids, and mealy bugs, which feed on plant sap and produce honeydew. They are known to forage on seeds, including lettuce and tobacco seeds.

The black crazy ant has a negative impact on biodiversity by outcompeting, displacing, and eating native ant and invertebrate species which in turn disrupts food webs and the ecosystem.

These ants lack a stinger but do bite and may spray formic acid into a wound. They have been known to bring pathogenic bacteria into hospitals in Brazil.

The crazy ant is an invasive and tramp species of African or Asian origin but now has a worldwide distribution. They may be found all over the USA from South Carolina to Florida and west to Texas. Populations are reported from Arizona, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Missouri, New York and Virginia, as well as Quebec and Ontario, Canada.

**References:**

Black Crazy Ant. (2014). Retrieved from <http://www.tsusinvasives.org/home/database/paratrechina-longicornis>

Klotz, J., Hansen, L., Pospichil, R. & Rust, M. (2008). *Urban ants of North America and Europe: identification, biology, and management*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

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