

Pest Profile



Photo credit: April Nobile, California Academy of Sciences
(Specimen CASENT 0104203; from <https://www.antweb.org>)

Common Name: Robust crazy ant

Scientific Name: *Nylanderia bourbonica*

Order and Family: Order Hymenoptera; Family Formicidae

Size and Appearance:

| | Length (mm) | Appearance |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Egg | | |
| Larva/Nymph | | |
| Adult | Workers range from 2.11 – 3.04 mm | <i>Nylanderia</i> crazy ants are characterized by large eyes, 12-segmented antennae which do not conclude in a club (enlarged segments), a one-part waist, and coarse hairs (setae) on their head, the first part of the antennae (scape) and their bodies. The antennae and legs are relatively long. These ants lack a stinger but have an opening (acidiopore) at the end of their abdomen (gaster) from which they spray formic acid. |

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| | | <p>The robust crazy ant also has three simple eyes (ocelli) on the upper portion of the face and finer grayish hairs on the body. The cuticle of the head is mostly smooth and shiny while the body has punctulae (puncture-like) texture. Color varies from dark brown to black.</p> <p>Queens are similar to workers but have a larger thorax to accommodate flight muscles.</p> <p>Males are similar to workers but have a larger thorax.</p> |
| Pupa (if applicable) | | |

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

Host(s): The robust crazy ant feeds 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):

Though common, the robust crazy ant is a minor nuisance pest, rarely entering homes and buildings. They are known pests in agriculture though they may also be partly beneficial because they eat many kinds of insects and arthropods. These ants do tend plant sucking hemipterans such as aphids, scale insects, and mealy bugs. They have been known to damage bananas.

Though they lack a stinger, they may bite and spray formic acid into the wound, which may be irritating.

The robust crazy ant is an invasive and tramp species with a world-wide distribution. In the USA, the robust crazy ant has been reported from Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Missouri, South Carolina, and Texas.

References:

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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