

Pest Profile



Photo credit: April Nobile, California Academy of Science
(Specimen 0005838; from <https://www.antweb.org>)

Common Name: Slender Twig ant (twig ant, elongate twig ant, Mexican twig ant)

Scientific Name: *Pseudomyrmex gracilis*

Order and Family: Order Hymenoptera; Family Formicidae

Size and Appearance:

	Length (mm)	Appearance
Egg		
Larva/Nymph	Worker larvae are 6 mm.	
Adult	Workers are 8 – 10 mm.	Workers have noticeably large eyes, a two-part waist, erect hairs, and a stinger. Their color varies greatly from orange-brown to dark brown-black but can also be bicolored with darker head and abdomen and lighter thorax and legs. Colonies have one queen (monogynous).
Pupa (if applicable)		

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

Host(s): The slender twig ant is omnivorous, feeding on animals and plants including live insects (especially lepidopteran larvae), fungal spores, and honeydew from hemipteran plant pests.

Description of Damage (larvae and adults):

The slender twig ant nests in a variety of trees and shrubs (similar species may be acacia specialists) and will defend these plants if touched. The ants have a painful sting that may lead to serious allergic reactions.

Although the slender twig ant usually nests in living plants, causing little damage, they may nest in the wood of homes, such as door frames.

The slender twig ant may impact ecosystems by excluding other arboreal ants including carpenter ants (*Camponotus* species) and by preying on butterfly and moth larvae (Lepidoptera).

The slender twig ant is originally from Mexico but has been introduced into a number of areas including Alabama, California, Florida, Hawaii, Louisiana, Mississippi, 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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Toth, P.L. (2018). Slender twig ant. University of Florida Featured Creatures Extension Publication No. EENY-418. Retrieved from http://entnemdept.ufl.edu/creatures/misc/ants/elongate_twig_ant.htm