

Pest Profile



Photo credit: April Nobile, California Academy of Sciences
(Specimen 0173238 (<https://www.antweb.org>))

Common Name: Tawny crazy ant (Raspberry crazy ant; Caribbean crazy ant; hairy crazy ant)

Scientific Name: *Nylanderia vulva*

Order and Family: Order Hymenoptera; Family Formicidae

Size and Appearance:

	Length (mm)	Appearance
Egg		
Larva/Nymph		
Adult	Workers range from 2.0 – 2.5 mm Queens: 4 mm Males: 2.4 – 2.7 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. Workers are reddish brown with course hairs (setae). Colonies have multiple queens (polygynous).
Pupa (if applicable)		

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

Host(s): The tawny 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):

The tawny crazy ant displaces native ants and other arthropods, which may affect many other animals, especially bird species that feed on these animals. They feed on a variety of insects, arthropods, small vertebrates, and obtain honeydew from various hemipterans. The tawny crazy ant also outcompetes, displaces, and attacks the red imported fire ant, but the tawny crazy ant's negative impacts appear to be greater than those of the red imported fire ant.

These ants consume fruit and harm agricultural crops through their tending of hemipterans, which include mealy bugs, whiteflies, aphids, and scale insects. The tawny crazy ant is a pest of livestock, including chickens and cattle, because they attack them around the eyes, nostrils, and feet.

They nest in homes, including crawl spaces and walls. When they occur in great densities, they disrupt human activities. Though these ants lack a stinger, they do bite and may spray formic acid into the wound.

They damage electrical wiring, causing short circuits.

These ants may carry pathogens from plants, animals, and humans.

The tawny crazy ant is an invasive and tramp species with a world-wide distribution and is found in the southern USA with reports from Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Missouri, and Texas.

References:

Crazy ants. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://bfl.utexas.edu/research/invasive-species-research/crazy-ants>

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.

MacGown, J. (2016). *Nylanderia fulva*. Retrieved from https://mississippientomologicalmuseum.org.msstate.edu/Researchtaxapages/Formicidaepages/genericpages/Nylanderia_fulva.htm

Nylanderia fulva. (2019). Retrieved from https://www.antwiki.org/wiki/Nylanderia_fulva