

## Pest Profile



Photo credit: April Nobile, AntWeb

**Common Name:** Black Imported Fire Ant

**Scientific Name:** *Solenopsis richteri*

**Order and Family:** Hymenoptera: Formicidae

**Size and Appearance:**

	Length (mm)	Appearance
<b>Egg</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Oval and white.</li></ul>
<b>Larva/Nymph</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Legless, comma shaped, and white.</li></ul>
<b>Adult</b>	1 - 4 mm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Browning black with a darker abdomen.</li><li>● First segment of abdomen with a reddish - orange spot.</li><li>● 10 segmented (11 segmented on the queen), elbowed antennae ending in a 2 segmented club.</li><li>● Black scape.</li><li>● Two segmented waist.</li></ul>
<b>Pupa (if applicable)</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Similar in shape to worker ants, but with appendages held close to the body.</li></ul>

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

**Host/s:** A variety of hosts comprise the diet of the black imported fire ant including arthropods, dead animals, seeds, honeydew, oily meats, nuts, and sweet substances. They have had an ecological impact by eliminating ground nesting species from the local environment. Fire ants also feed on young saplings and seedlings and can damage developing buds and fruits. Many agricultural crops are also negatively affected by the feeding and nesting habits of fire ants including soybean, corn, and okra.

**Description of Damage (larvae and adults):** Black imported fire ants can build unsightly mounds in yards or other grassy areas. Humans and pets may come in contact with the ants when the nests are disturbed. The ants are aggressive and will readily sting and bite the threat, resulting in a burning and itching sensation. Shortly after, white pustules form and can last for weeks, potentially becoming infected and leaving scar tissue. Some short term effects from the stings to sensitive people include nausea, dizziness, chest pain, shock, and even death. Fire ants have also been implicated in damaging electrical equipment by chewing on the wires.

#### **References:**

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