

Beneficial Species Profile



Photo credit: Flavia Esteves, California Academy of Sciences
(Specimen CASENT 09019632; from www.antweb.org)

Common Name: Pavement Ant (sugar ant and referred to as a tramp ant)

Scientific Name: *Tetramorium caespitum*

Order and Family: Order Hymenoptera; Family Formicidae

Size and Appearance:

	Length (mm)	Appearance
Egg		
Larva/Nymph		
Adult	Workers range from 2.5 to 3 mm Queens range from 6 – 8 mm Males range from 5.7 – 7 mm	Workers are monomorphic with sculpture or texture of parallel lines on the head and thorax (rugae). The workers vary in color from brown to a dark red-brown to black. They have antennae of 12 segments, the last three are enlarged to form a club. They have a two-part waist and a stinger. Queens resemble workers but have a pair of dorsal spines and are dark brown. Colonies usually have one queen (monogamous) but may have several.

		Males lack the dorsal spines.
Pupa (if applicable)		

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

Host(s): Pavement ants are omnivorous, generalist foragers feeding on a variety of animals and plants, including fruits and seeds.

Description of Benefits (predator, parasitoid, pollinator, etc.):

In laboratory tests, the pavement ant was shown to destroy the red-imported fire ant, which may help slow the expansion of the red-imported fire ant if this also occurs in nature.

The pavement ant may provide basic ecosystem functions in urban areas such as seed dispersal and recycling nutrients. Due to their nesting, they may facilitate gas and water penetration into soil. Pavement ants eat live and dead insects and may help to control these populations.

The pavement ant is a tramp species and was introduced to the USA from Europe. The pavement ant is commonly found in the Pacific Northwestern, Northeastern, and Midwestern regions of the USA and some Canadian provinces.

References:

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