

Beneficial Species Profile



Photo credit: April Nobile, California Academy of Sciences
(Specimen CASENT0006306; from <https://www.antweb.org>)

Common Name: Red harvester ant (big red ants; harvester ants, red ants; Barbatus harvester ant)

Scientific Name: *Pogonomyrmex barbatus*

Order and Family: Order Hymenoptera; Family Formicidae

Size and Appearance:

	Length (mm)	Appearance
Egg		
Larva/Nymph		
Adult	Workers range from 5 – 8 mm	<p><i>Pogonomyrmex</i> harvester ants are characterized by broad, boxy heads, 12-segmented antennae, a two-part waist, a pair of dorsal spines and a stinger. Many species have a set of long hairs (called a psammophore) on the posterior lower portion of the head, behind the mouthparts.</p> <p>Workers of the red harvester ant are polymorphic without distinct majors and minors. They vary in color</p>

		<p>from a light to very deep red and they have texture in the form of lines on the head (rugae).</p> <p>Colonies have one queen (monogynous).</p> <p>Queens are similar to workers but larger with a larger thorax.</p> <p>Female and male reproductive ants have wings.</p>
Pupa (if applicable)		

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

Host(s): Harvester ants in the genus *Pogonomyrmex* specialize in seeds but may forage on other foods (generalist and opportunistic).

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

Although the red harvester ant specializes on seeds, they also eat screwworm larvae, crop pests, termites, and cattle ear ticks.

The red harvester ant is found in Mexico and the USA, including Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada, Oklahoma, and Texas.

References:

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Schmidt, J.O. (2003). Venoms. In R.H. Resh & R. T. Carde. (Eds.) *Encyclopedia of insects* (1160 – 1163). Amsterdam: Academic Press.

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