

What Is the Little Fire Ant?

The little fire ant (LFA) is a new, invasive, stinging ant that will spread across the Hawaiian Islands if we don't take action now.

LFA infest yards, houses, farms, and forests. Their powerful stings harm people and wildlife. LFA sting the eyes of pets, leading to blindness. LFA damage crops, food production, and the economy everywhere they have spread. In infested areas, stings are unavoidable. They are more than a nuisance, they harm people's health, lifestyle, and quality of life.



Island of Hawai'i, LFA-infested areas (2014)

When LFA were first discovered in 1999 in the Puna area of Hawai'i island, the infestation spanned 40 acres on multiple properties, and there were no treatments available for LFA in fruit trees. Since then, LFA have spread hidden in plants, logs, greenwaste, and even cars. Interisland spread has been somewhat limited by plant treatment and inspection, although this is just one way that these pests can be transported.

In December 2013, LFA were discovered in hāpu'u logs at nurseries and garden shops on O'ahu and Maui, and in landscaping on Lāna'i. Much of the hāpu'u sold to the public remains unaccounted for.

A multi-agency response continues to survey for LFA and successfully treat new, small infestations, but there may be more out there, and LFA will occasionally arrive from Hawaii island. We are asking your kōkua: test your property for LFA and submit ant samples to HDOA annually. Mahalo!

Detect — Report — Stop the Little Fire Ant

DETECT

HDOA locations for dropping off or mailing samples:

Kaua'i: 4398A Pua Loke St, Lihu'e, HI 96766

O'ahu: 1428 S. King St, Honolulu, HI 96814

Maui: 635 Mua St, Kahului, HI 96732

Moloka'i: C/O The Nature Conservancy
23 Pueo Pl, Kaunakakai, HI 96748

Hawai'i: Hawai'i Ant Lab / HDOA
16 E. Lanikaula St, Hilo, HI 96720

REPORT

Report a suspected LFA infestation
to any of the following places:

Hawai'i Department of Agriculture Statewide Hotline: 643-PEST (7378)

Kaua'i Invasive Species Committee: 821-1490

O'ahu Invasive Species Committee: 266-7994

Maui Invasive Species Committee: 573-6472

Moloka'i Invasive Species Committee: 553-5236

Big Island Invasive Species Committee: 933-3340

Hawai'i Ant Lab: 315-5656 (Hawai'i Island)

LEARN MORE

For more information about LFA, visit
www.StopTheAnt.org or www.littlefireants.com
or hdoa.hawaii.gov/pi/main/lfainfo/

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Little Fire Ant

Wasmannia auropunctata



LFA on chopstick



Blind pets



Stings

Detect-Report-Stop the Little Fire Ant

Protect Your Family

DETECT

Supplies: peanut butter, disposable chopsticks, zip-top bags, marking pen.



1. Place sticks with a **thin** smear of peanut butter* every few feet in and around plants in your yard, garden, and lānai. Focus on shady, moist areas, the bottoms of pots, and where plants' leaves meet the stem. *Use regular peanut butter, not natural or fat-free. For those with peanut allergy, use pieces of luncheon meat and tongs to retrieve the pieces.
2. Leave the sticks in place for **1 hour** during the cool part of the day.
3. Carefully pick up **each stick with ants** and place them into a zip-top bag, making sure the ants don't fall off.



4. Seal the bag. Label it with your name, address, and phone number. Put it in your **freezer overnight** to kill the ants.
5. Deliver or mail the sample to the Hawaii Department of Agriculture (HDOA) office (see back for locations).



View the video *How to Test for LFA* at vimeo.com/97558997, or at www.StopTheAnt.org/resources

REPORT

Call the HDOA statewide **pest hotline at 643-PEST** to report that you might have LFA. Drop off (or mail) the sample (zip-top bag with frozen ants) to any HDOA office (see back for locations).

HDOA will contact you when the ants are identified. **Do not disturb the ants** and **do not control or treat the area**. This will make the nests difficult to find and possibly spread them further.

STOP the LFA

If HDOA confirms that you don't have the LFA, congratulations and thank you! Remain vigilant. **Always quarantine and test** any new plants, cut flowers, plant materials, mulch, soil, and other items that might be infested.

If HDOA confirms that you have LFA, they will explain your options and ask for your help. In general, we will work with you to control or eradicate it if found on islands within the state where they are not known to be established, but we need your help to find it and your permission to do the work, which can prevent LFA from becoming established.



How to identify the LFA:

- Tiny ants, $\frac{1}{16}$ inch, as long as a penny is thick.
- Orange-red in color.
- Slow-moving.



Look-alike: Tropical fire ant

- A common, larger stinging ant.
- Widespread.
- Builds ground nests in sunny, dry areas.
- Nests have distinct openings.



An entire LFA colony can fit in a macadamia nut shell.

- LFA don't form mounds.
- Their nests don't have distinct openings; they occur in moist, shady areas, in trees, under bark, under rocks, in logs and leaf litter.