Problem and Emerging Ant Pests in Georgia

Daniel R. Suiter
University of Georgia
Department of Entomology
Griffin, GA
Velvet Ants (Cow Killers)... Are Not Ants!

- Wingless, solitary, parasitic wasp.
- May inflict painful sting if handled.
- Commonly parasitize cicada killers and other large wasp species (Hymenoptera: Sphecidae).
Ant Control
Alter environment/ correct conducive conditions
(cut branches, remove leaf litter & debris, dry the environment)

Baits (gel, granule, liquid, and station) minimize exposure and are target-specific.

To a lesser extent liquid sprays (spot spray to nests) and granular formulations (broadcast) to grass.
Argentine Ants
(#1 nuisance ant pest in GA)

*Termidor* spray outside only (primarily); expose nests in mulch and spray (no more than 1 gal); spray trailing ants.

Bait inside as needed.
Argentine Ants
Linepithema humile
Statewide/Mostly South and South Central GA
Argentine Ants

- Known as “sugar ant” in Georgia
- Introduced into New Orleans in 1890s
- Southeast, California, Hawaii
- Nests in mulch, leaf litter (moisture); moves indoors in winter to survive cold
- Hundreds of thousands of workers and thousands of queens; long foraging trails (at least 350 feet)
Argentine Ants...

...nest in mulch and leaf litter because they retain moisture.
Rain Causes Argentine Ants to Move, but Drought Drives Them Indoors for Water

Ants Congregate Under Things
Argentine Ants
Winter Nest Sites
Tawny Crazy Ants

(#1 emerging nuisance ant pest in GA; sporadic in South and Southeast GA)

*Termidor* spray outside, baits inside and outside as needed.

First GA find in Albany (August 2013) Camden and Glynn Counties (August 2014)
Tawny Crazy Ant

*Nylanderia fulva*

(aka Raspberry Crazy Ant, Hairy Crazy Ant, Caribbean Crazy Ant)

- Introduced into FL and TX from South America.
- Major pest where found (FL, TX, AL, MS, LA, GA).

August 2013 Albany, Georgia

August 2014

Camden & Glynn Counties

J. MacGown, Miss Ent Museum
Distribution of *Nylanderia fulva* in US

- **Red**: First record from US, 1953
- **Orange**: US county records by 2004
- **Yellow**: US county records, 2004-2012
- **Blue**: US county records, after August 2013

Locations mentioned:
- August 2013 TCA Find
- August 2014 TCA Find
- Camden & Glynn Counties

J. MacGown, Miss Ent Museum
Tawny Crazy Ant
Camden County, GA
August 2014
Tawny Crazy Ant
Camden County, GA
August 2014
Tawny Crazy Ant
Camden County, GA
August 2014
Tawny Crazy Ants Flourish in Areas with Junk Piles and General Yard Debris

Albany, GA August 2013
TCA Impact on Electronics
Black Carpenter Ants
Florida Carpenter Ants

Gel bait placed where ants are foraging at night. Apply the amount that would fit on a nickel.

Liquid baits to a lesser extent.
Black Carpenter Ant
Camponotus pennsylvanicus

Northern two-thirds of State?
Savannah-Yes
Brunswick-No
Outdoors, carpenter ants nest mainly in large, hardwood trees.
Carpenter Ants Construct Permanent Trails
Florida Carpenter Ant
Camponotus floridanus

South and Southeast GA
Savannah-No
Brunswick-Yes
Carpenter Ant Nest Sites
Deliver Granular & Gel Baits from Piles

Ants foraging indoors from a nest in a tree outside

Place Gel Here

Hardwood Tree

Permanent Trail

Nest in Tree
MaxForce Carpenter Ant Bait Gel
(0.001% fipronil)
MaxForce Gel: Colony Baited July 8, 2011
1,000+ Dead Carpenter Ants
Optigard Carpenter Ant Bait Gel
(0.01% thiamethoxam)
Advion Carpenter Ant Bait Gel
(0.05% indoxacarb)
Mound Ants

*Formcia* spp.
Mound Ants

*Formica sp.*

Northwest Georgia
Mound Ants
*Formica* spp.

Northwest Georgia
Mound Ant Baiting:
*Advance* granules and *MaxForce* gel
Mound Ant Baiting: 
*Advance Granules and MaxForce Gel*
Fire Ants

Texas “Two Step”
Step 1: Broadcast granular bait OR place a handful around (not on top of) each mound. Apply bait in late afternoon, when it’s cool and ants are actively foraging. DO NOT disturb mound.

Step 2: One week after bait treatment, locate active mounds and treat each mound with liquid or dust.
Acrobat Ants

Baits inside & outside.

Remove tree branch and wire contacts with building.
Acrobat Ants

*Crematogaster* spp.

• Acrobat ants commonly nest inside foam-board insulation.
• Debris is often chewed insulation and:
  – Can contain insect parts
  – Can contain dead acrobat ants

• Once they are inside, it can be difficult to find the colony

• Cutting vegetation away from structures can help reduce access
Acrobat ants like to nest in foam insulation.
Questions?
Pachycondyla chinensis
Asian Needle ant

• SE Distribution: AL, FL, GA, NC, SC, TN

• Origin: China, Japan
Pachycondyla chinensis
Asian Needle ant
The Asian Needle ant nests in and under yard debris.
*Brachymyrmex patagonicus*

Dark Rover ant

- **SE Distribution:** AL, AR, FL, GA, LA, MS, NC, SC
- **Origin:** Argentina, Neotropics

Statewide in GA Yet?
Dark Rover Ant
Brachymyrmex patagonicus
Dark Rover Ant

*Brachymyrmex patagonicus*

- Native to Argentina; first reported from the U.S. in 1978 in Louisiana.
- Since its initial report, Dark Rover ants have become well established and abundant in the Gulf Coast region, and still appear to be spreading.
- It has become a nuisance pest with occasional large infestations in homes, hospitals, and various other businesses.
Dark Rover Ant Nests

*Brachymyrmex patagonicus*

In soil at bases of plants (including trees), under objects on the ground, in leaf litter, in rotting wood, under bark of trees, in grass thatch, in landscaping mulch, in trash piles, *in structures of buildings*, etc.
Distribution
Dark Rover Ant
*Brachymyrmex patagonicus*

Image by Joe MacGown
Structural Pest Control Training Center: 2013
Structural Pest Control
Training Center: 2013
Ultrasonic Devices:
Do Not Repel or Control Pests!
Recent EPA Label Changes to Impact Perimeter Pest Management

- In California, pesticides in water have led to restrictions on product use around homes.
- The climate of bee protection, including the “Oregon incident”, has led to EPA restrictions on the use of neonicotinoids (soon these restrictions will be for all spray products, says EPA).
- Fewer basic manufacturers developing fewer active ingredients (cost prohibitive).