

## What should I do if stung by a Red Imported Fire Ant?

People should avoid coming into contact with Red Imported Fire Ants. If you are stung by one, please take the following measures:

- Wash the wound with soap and water and keep the blisters intact;
- Apply a cold compress to relieve the swelling and pain;
- Do not scratch the blisters;
- If necessary, seek medical attention; and
- If you are allergic to insects or you have rapid onset of flushing, general hives; swelling of the face, eyes or throat; chest pain; nausea; excessive sweating; breathing difficulties; and dizziness, see a doctor immediately.

## Enquiries and further information

- Plant and Pesticides Regulatory Division  
The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department  
Address: 5/F, Cheung Sha Wan Government Offices,  
303 Cheung Sha Wan Road, Kowloon.  
Tel : 2150 7000  
Email : [plantlic@afcd.gov.hk](mailto:plantlic@afcd.gov.hk)
- Department of Health's 24-hour Health Education Hotline: 2833 0111
- Government website: [www.gov.hk](http://www.gov.hk)

# Tackling Red Imported Fire Ants

## What is a Red Imported Fire Ant?

- Red Imported Fire Ant is a kind of ants and its scientific name is *Solenopsis invicta* Buren.

## How do we distinguish Red Imported Fire Ants from other ants?

- Red Imported Fire Ant is a small ant species (about 3-6 mm) which is difficult to distinguish from other ants by the form or other features. However, when Red Imported Fire Ants are disturbed, they will emerge from the mounds and be very aggressive.

## Is Red Imported Fire Ant a local species or where is its origin?

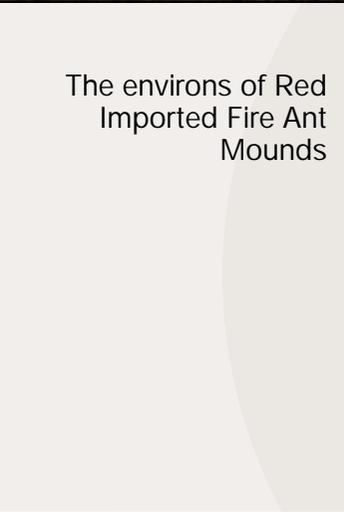
- Red Imported Fire Ants are small ants native to South America. They have dispersed to other parts of the world through commercial activities and shipments of farm produce. They were introduced to southern regions of the USA in the 1920's, Australia in 2001, and Taiwan in 2003. In late 2004, Red Imported Fire Ants were discovered in Guangdong.

## What is the impact of Red Imported Fire Ants on us?

- Given their large populations and aggressiveness, Red Imported Fire Ants may have an impact on ecology and the natural environment.
- Red Imported Fire Ants may also give humans a fiery sting. The sting can give a painful, itchy and burning sensation. A blister will form at the base of each sting and the wound will usually heal in 10 to 14 days if it is tended properly. On rare occasions, Red Imported Fire Ant stings can cause severe acute allergic reactions which may lead to death. According to current information, instances of severe acute allergic reactions caused by Red Imported Fire Ant stings are rare.



A typical mound of Red Imported Fire Ants



The environs of Red Imported Fire Ant Mounds



A close-up of Red Imported Fire Ant

## Where do Red Imported Fire Ants build their nest?

- Red Imported Fire Ants usually build their nests in places such as abandoned fields, footpaths of farmlands, dams, kerbs, village roads, lawns, gardens and golf courses.

## What are the characteristics of the nest of Red Imported Fire Ants?

- The easiest way to identify Red Imported Fire Ants is to trace their mounds. Red Imported Fire Ants will build an earth mound 10 to 45 cm high at the entrance of their nest.

## How can we eliminate Red Imported Fire Ants?

- If suspected Red Imported Fire Ants are discovered, a small quantity can be eliminated by domestic pesticides. If it is a large colony, pest control companies should be hired to eradicate the pest. Please apply pesticides in accordance with the amount indicated on the label of the pesticide product and wear appropriate protective clothing.

## Collection and delivery of specimens

- Please soak dead suspected ants in 70% alcohol, specifying the time and place of collection, the person who collected the specimen and contact information and send the specimens to the [Plant and Pesticides Regulatory Division of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department at 5/F, Cheung Sha Wan Government Offices, 303 Cheung Sha Wan Road, Kowloon](#). Please ensure that the specimens are delivered in a safe manner and carry out necessary precautions when collecting ant samples to avoid being stung by them.

