



County of San Diego

Department of Agriculture, Weights and Measures

Red Imported Fire Ant (RIFA)

Infestations of Red Imported Fire Ants (RIFA) have been detected in northern San Diego County. All infestations have been controlled.

- RIFA are a threat to human health. The ants are aggressive and will swarm if disturbed.
- RIFA anchor themselves with their mouthparts and then sting repeatedly. The sting causes an intense burning sensation at the sting site, followed by the development of a pustule. Ten to 20 stings per attack are common. While you cannot positively identify these ants by just looking at them, they are reddish brown and small - 1/16" to 1/4" long (similar in size to the common argentine ant).
- RIFA are a threat to California agriculture, property and landscaping. The ants feed on germinating seeds and damage crops. They can cause damage to structures, electrical equipment, gardens and landscaping.

RIFA can be found where there is moisture and good drainage. Typical locations include greenbelts and lawns, the bases of tree trunks, curbs adjoining lawn areas, and bedded plants. RIFA may be found in areas that have been recently landscaped.

Red Imported Fire Ants make mounds, very similar to gopher mounds, except the soil deposited is of a finer texture. Mounds vary from about the size of a golf ball to a basketball. On warm days, stomping adjacent to the mound will very quickly bring ants to the surface.

If you believe you have RIFA, **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO TREAT THEM YOURSELF**. County personnel will assist you in identifying RIFA and will treat colonies at no cost to you. Please help by reporting any RIFA mounds you find.

Call **1-800-200-2337**. If you would like to:

- Report possible ant mound: Leave your name and phone number.
- Request additional Information: Leave your name and phone number.
- Receive ant submission kit: Leave your name and mailing address.

Additional information is available at www.cdfa.ca.gov/phpps/pdep/rifa.