

PAVEMENT ANT

Order/Family:

Hymenoptera/Formicidae

Scientific Name:

Tetramorium caespitum (Linnaeus)

Description: Pavement ants are 1/16- to 1/8-inch long with a dark body and lighter colored legs. They have two small spines on the back portion of the thorax, two nodes in their petioles, and their bodies are covered with stiff hairs. Pavement ants are easily identified by the narrow, parallel grooves on their heads and thoraxes.

Biology: Little is known about the biology of this species. The developmental time (egg to adult) is 36 to 63 days. Indoors, swarmers emerge anytime, and they emerge outdoors in June and July.

Habits: Pavement ants are commonly found in metropolitan areas in the eastern and central United States and in California. They nest outdoors under flat stones, under sidewalks, along curbing, under concrete slabs, etc. They invade structures in search of food and are a particular problem in areas where slab-on-grade construction is prevalent. Inside structures, they nest in walls, insulation, floors, and near heat sources during the winter.

Pavement ants feed on insects, meats, seeds, and sweets, but they prefer meats and greases. They are slow-moving insects and are frequently observed in areas where they are prevalent. They forage in trails as far as 30 feet from the nest. Although they are not particularly aggressive, workers can bite and sting.