

## There's a New Pest in Town

A new species of invasive and very pesky ant has been discovered in Bexar County.

The Raspberry Crazy Ant was first found in Pasadena near Houston in 2002 and has caused considerable alarm. They have been found in immense numbers in the electronics at Johnson Space Center and the electrical systems of large manufacturers in that area. In 2009, Raspberry Crazy Ants were discovered in central San Antonio, and experts are concerned about the damage they may cause to sensitive areas near San Antonio. Of equal concern is the damage that may be caused to the aquifer by inappropriate treatment methods.

Although Raspberry Crazy Ants do not sting, they can bite, and cause great annoyance, literally blanketing the ground and trees, making it uncomfortable to spend time outdoors. They infest almost any container or material: potted plants, mulch, garbage, yard debris, bags, loads of compost, bales of hay, etc. And we move these items by car, truck, and air frequently! July and August are the times of year when their populations increase dramatically; the risk of spread throughout the community is now!



Photo by Mike Quinn

The best way to prevent Raspberry Crazy Ants is to be “ant-aware.” Get suspicious ants identified by the Bexar County Extension Entomologist, Molly Keck (210-467-6575). Avoid bringing anything into your yard or home that seems to be infested with ants, because you never know! And if you believe you have Raspberry Crazy Ants, practice sanitation in the landscape and home by avoiding clutter and debris in the yard, removing items that are piled up along the building, and taking care not to spread the ants.

Unfortunately, these ants are very hard to control. They are attracted to most bait products for fire ants and other ants, but store-bought chemicals are ineffective and should not be used. The best treatments provide a short-term barrier-like protection, but can ONLY be applied by a licensed applicator familiar with these specific ants.

For more information about this ant, Texas Parks and Wildlife and Texas AgriLife Extension are partnering to provide community educational workshops. To request a community workshop, please contact Texas AgriLife Extension at 210-467-6575 or Texas Parks & Wildlife Department at 210-688-6444.

---

### Reference:

Allan Turner, Houston Chronicle, 'Crazy' ants wreaking havoc in Houston-area households,  
<http://www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/front/5781180.html>