

White-footed ant Update Feb 2005

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1st map – 2003

2nd map (next page) – February 2005

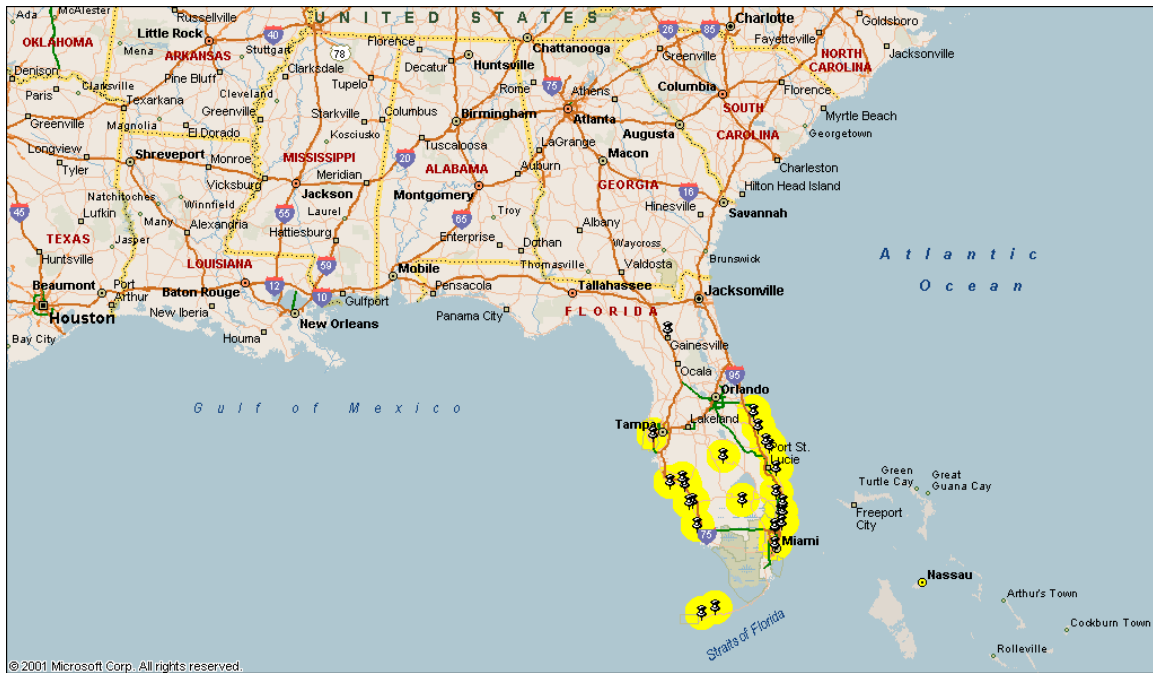


Figure 1: White-footed ant reports, as of 2003. Not yet reaching Orlando to the North. Infestation includes much of south Florida.



Figure 2: White-footed ant reports, as of February 2005. Isolated reports include Columbia, SC, New Orleans, LA, Savannah, GA, and February 2005 from Paradise Island, Bahamas.

The White-Footed Ant Makes a Comeback

A small black ant that received much attention a couple of years ago is back and ready to infest your home. A native of Southeast Asia, the White-Footed Ant (WFA) was first collected in Homestead, in 1986, and by 2005, as it expands northward, has included much of Florida in its established range, with the newest reports of Florida infestations coming from the Jacksonville area. This ant does not bite, sting or cause any structural damage to properties, but seems to appear from nowhere in large numbers in kitchens and bathrooms causing alarm to homeowners.

University of Florida graduate student John Warner who did his master of science thesis on WFA (2000-2003) and is now doing his PhD research on these ants, reports that he has seen more WFA activity this year than he has seen in the last few years. Besides being a graduate student, Mr. Warner owns and operates Shalom Pest Control in Boca Raton, and reports he has also received more calls from new customers about WFA problems this year than in the past few years, and because it is not yet Spring, predicts that this year will see increased activity.

Home owners who see trails of small black ants often coming from trees and shrubs and trailing up and down the sides of their homes, should not wait to take action, said Warner, because it will only get worse as the weather warms, increasing the highly efficient

reproductive ability of this amazing ant. Actions that homeowners can take include cutting trees and shrubs away from their homes, and using lots of liquid ant bait (always maintain a sufficient, fresh supply). Warner invented a liquid bait for WFA called NecDew which has been patented by the University of Florida, but is not yet available to the public. Insecticidal sprays can also help if used correctly. (Always follow label directions when using insecticides.)

Homeowners might not wish to tackle the arduous task of dealing with WFA by instead contacting local pest control companies. It is suggested that companies be used that have a proven track record in controlling this ant. Warner reports that many of his new customers had used other companies that were not capable of controlling the infestations, and suggests that homeowners become more informed about this ant before calling a pest control company. Probably the best way to learn more about WFA is to read University of Florida publications dedicated to this species, which are available on the Internet on the University's website, and include:

University of Florida IFAS Extension article on WFA:

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/IN/IN09800.pdf>

University of Florida, Featured Creatures article on WFA:

http://creatures.ifas.ufl.edu/urban/ants/white-footed_ant.htm

Master of Science thesis on WFA:

http://nersp.nerdc.ufl.edu/~ortgedb/etdNew/jwarner1/Warner_J.pdf

For further information, contact your local agricultural extension office.