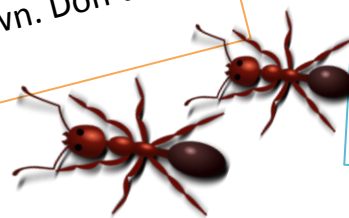


## MYTHS ABOUT LITTLE FIRE ANTS



**WRONG:** "If you mix Amdro with peanut butter, it will work better!"

**RIGHT:** LFA are so small, covering the granules with peanut butter can actually lead to your ants feeding on only peanut butter, and not getting the poison! Amdro, Siesta, and other granule baits are pre-mixed to be attractive on their own. Don't mix them with anything!



**WRONG:** "You need to use bait stations so the bait stays good outside for longer."

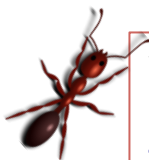
**RIGHT:** Little fire ants don't "smell", so they won't come running for food. They forage widely and put down a chemical trail for other ants when they find something good. **Spreading the bait far and wide to reach many ants is the best approach. They only need about 4-6 hours of access to the bait**, so you don't need it to be protected. In fact, the active ingredient will break down after about 36 hours, meaning all that is left in the bait station is harmless food for the ants!

**WRONG:** "Three (or 6, or 10) worker ants can get together and make a new queen."

**RIGHT: Only a queen ant can lay a queen egg.** Queens have to be born queens. Worker ants don't have reproductive abilities, so they can't lay eggs. Visiting an LFA-infested site for a few hours? Don't worry, it isn't enough time for a queen to move in, even if you see workers running about.

**WRONG:** "I never bring home potted plants, so I don't have to worry about bringing in fire ants."

**RIGHT:** Little fire ants love people stuff, and they will happily build nests wherever they can find a small space. **Anything that's been sitting still for a while – wood, building materials, old furniture, cinder, even cars – could have a fire ant nest!** Quarantine with a barrier treatment before you bring things on to your property.



**WRONG:** "I've never been stung, so I don't have any fire ants on my property."

**RIGHT:** Little fire ants are sneaky, and their nests are very small. **You can have LFA on your property for 6 months or even a year before they build up to the point where you notice them!** The only way to be SURE is to survey – and you should survey 4 times a year to catch infestations early.



For more information about LFA, visit our site at [www.biisc.org/lfa](http://www.biisc.org/lfa) or email [biisc@hawaii.edu](mailto:biisc@hawaii.edu)

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW TO TREAT LFA THE RIGHT WAY:

Little fire ants **do not build large mounds or nests underground**. Instead, they form a network made up of many small nests with many queens, from the tops of trees to the bottoms of wood piles.

**TREATMENT:** Spread bait far and wide to get to as many ants as possible – this means using a gel bait if you have lots of trees, and spraying bait as high as you can reach!

Many things will kill ants, but **killing only the ants you see won't help your problem** at all.

**TREATMENT:** You must use a BAIT product to get the workers to take the bait back to the queen to have any impact on the colony.

**Treatment must be consistently applied every 4-6 weeks for a year (or more!) to be fully effective** in eliminating the ants on your property. Treat too early, and the ants may not pick up the bait. Treat too late, and they may have already rebuilt their population. The queens will lay a lot of extra eggs if they notice the colony start to decline.

**TREATMENT:** Whatever product you choose, treat strictly within a 4-6 week window!



*Little fire ants on Siesta granules.*



## Are they little fire ants?

Hawai'i has over 50 species of introduced ants (no native ants). The stinging tropical fire ant (a ground-nesting ant) has been around since the 1960's, and we also have many red ants. The only way to tell for sure if your ants are LFA is under a microscope, but here are some hints that should make you look twice!

### **Little fire ants:**

- are **VERY** small (1/16<sup>th</sup> inch!)
- are **solidly orange-red** in color (color is the same throughout the whole body)
- are **slow moving** even when disturbed
- they **fall easily** from leaves, branches, etc. with a gentle shake

**Want to know for sure?** Smear a bit of peanut butter onto the ends of some chopsticks. Lay (not poke!) the sticks in cool, damp areas – in banana trees and ti plants, along rock walls, around debris piles, in the crooks of trees – all around your property. Find small red ants? Tap them into a plastic bag, freeze them, and bring them/mail them in for identification.

**ALL BIG ISLAND RESIDENTS MUST SURVEY 4X/YEAR!**

Freeze your ant samples for at least 12 hours, then mail or drop off at one of these locations:

BIISC  
Attn: Jade M.  
23 E. Kawili St.  
Hilo, HI 96720

Hawaii Ant Lab  
Attn: ANT ID  
16 Lanikaula St.  
Hilo, HI 96720

Other islands: Please contact the ISC on your island to report any suspected colonies of fire ants! LFA have been confirmed on Oahu, Maui, and Kauai. Your help is needed to prevent further spread!