



06 Red Imported Fire Ants

Red Imported Fire Ants (RIFA, *Solenopsis invicta* Buren), known as Red Foreign Fire Ants (in short Red Fire Ants). In biologic taxonomy, they are classified as the solenopsis genus of myrmicinae subfamily from the hymenoptera formic family.

Red Fire Ants are a type of small to medium size omnivorous ants having reddish brown bodies with darker abdomens. Their appearance and living habits are similar to many kinds of ants as they are all social insects (with queen ants, male ants and worker ants, each performing their own function). Under the microscope the abdomen shaft (2 segments), a few segments of antenna (10 segments), the outstanding compound eyes with the medial clypeal teeth and the different body volume of the worker ants (the small, medium and large size) are the special features



characterizing the red fire ants. Moreover, these insects are totally ground dwelling and normally would like to build nests on the spacious lawn or greenbelts.

Red fire ants are of the strongly invasive type. Should their anthill

be disturbed they will rally together to launch an attack and assault their enemy with the sting at the end of the abdomen.

When one is being pricked or bitten, he/she will have burning pain and blisters.

Generally, it would recover in ten to fourteen days.

However, the poisonous secretion of the red fire ants is water soluble protein with a small amount of other substances which may initiate allergic reaction to the person whose constitution is anaphylactoid and would cause death if the situation is serious. At the same time, red fire ants are omnivorous, consuming both

plants and animals, affecting greatly the ecosystem, the agricultural products and the husbandry animals. At present, the most effective method of preventing red fire ants is the policy of "two-stage treatment", to be executed twice a year. The first phase includes placing baits around the nest and the second is dealing the anthill with contact insecticide or the like. When this method has been adopted for two seasons in Australia, the result is ideal and 98% of the treated regions are no more attacked by red fire ants.

Since these insects are greatly invasive, should such anthills be suspected to exist, do not touch or disturb those ants but dial 337676 to notify the Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau

Excerpted from "Teacher's Magazine" 11th Issue, May, 2005

教育文摘

出版：教育暨青年局 / 统筹：苏朝晖 / 编委：关启佳 / 技术支持：冯万雄 尉凤君 张子明 / 葡文翻译：Susana Maria Dias Zamith Silva / 英文翻译：何刘一星 / 设计：创意设计顾问有限公司 / 印刷：鸿兴柯式印刷有限公司 / 数量：五千份

Educação e Nós

Edição : Direcção dos Serviços de Educação e Juventude / Director : Sou Chio Fai / Conselho de Redacção : Kwan Kai Kai / Assistência técnica : Fong Man Hung, Wai Fong Kuan e Cheong Chi Meng / Tradução para Língua Portuguesa : Susana Maria Dias Zamith Silva / Tradução para Língua Inglesa : Maria Ho / Design : Minddesign Consultants Company Limited / Impressão : Tipografia Macau Hung Heng Ltda / Tiragem : 5,000

Educational Digest

Edit : Education and Youth Affairs Bureau / Director : Sou Chio Fai / Editing Committee : Kwan Kai Kai / Technical Assistance : Fong Man Hung, Wai Fong Kuan, Cheong Chi Meng / Translator(Portuguese) : Susana Maria Dias Zamith Silva / Translator(English) : Maria Ho / Design : Minddesign consultants company limited / Printing : Tipografia Macau Hung Heng Ltda. / Print Run:5,000