

# Pharaoh Ants

Pharaoh ants live in minute multi-colonies and are very difficult to eradicate. Nests are usually located near warm moist areas, in inaccessible areas such as behind baseboards, in furniture, under floors, and between linens. Pharaoh ants can be a problem in commercial food handling establishments, grocery stores, hospitals, and apartment complexes.

## *What do Pharaoh ants look like?*

Pharaoh ants are 1.5 mm in length and are yellow or light brown to red in colour.

## *What do Pharaoh ants eat?*

They have a wide food preference ranging from syrups to fruits, pies, meats, and dead insects.

## *What are the disease risks and damage associated with Pharaoh ants?*

There are no specific diseases associated with Pharaoh ants. However due to their extremely small size they are able to penetrate even secure packaging. This means that they may contaminate foodstuffs intended for human consumption, with germs picked up while traveling through buildings.

\* **Pharaoh ants do not bite.**

## *Are Pharaoh ants difficult to control?*

**YES.** Ant colonies are very large and may contain thousands to several hundred-thousand members. There are usually several hundred reproductive ants in these colonies, and if disturbed, the colony may fragment or “bud” to form several new nests. Care must be taken to ensure a thorough treatment is done so that budding does not occur.

## *If I have an infestation of Pharaoh ants, what can I do to eliminate them?*

Products are available for controlling ants. Depending on the severity of the infestation, a single control measure may not be effective and a licensed pest control service technician **must** conduct an integrated program.

\* **Do not spray because the colony may fragment; use insecticidal baits that are approved.**

### *What can I do to prevent an infestation of Pharaoh ants?*

- **Good housekeeping** practices such as keeping foods in sealed containers and ensuring that areas are free of food spillage and crumbs will help prevent ant infestations. Sealing cracks and crevices where the ants may live will be helpful.
- Have all water taps repaired if leaking. Ants like water.
- Keep pet foods covered when not used. Ants love pet food.
- Keep your apartment clean.
- Do not leave food out for more than 2 hours.

**We all must do our part to control the ant population.**

***For more information, please contact your nearest Environmental Public Health office.***

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