



# RED IMPORTED FIRE ANTS (RIFA)



*Solenopsis invicta*

## **Introduction:**

RIFA is an invasive species that has colonized the majority of Southern, and Central California. They are known for their aggressive behavior when defending their colony. They swarm quickly biting and stinging multiple times. RIFA are reddish-brown in color and approximately 1/16" to 1/4" inches long. These colonies build up rapidly and spread quickly from yard to yard. They have injured and killed small animals and people who are allergic. RIFA can cause damage to air conditioning units, and electrical circuits, along with causing severe damages to plants. If provided with adequate food and water

they can easily take over neighborhoods. Their nests are complicated making it extremely complicated to destroy them.

## **Identification:**

RIFA mounds are irregular piles of grainy loose soil with small holes. These mounds are wide rather than tall & can appear anywhere where there is adequate moisture. When their nest is disturbed these ants will rush out of the mound by the thousands to attack & defend their nest.

## **Control:**

RIFA rely heavily on irrigation & areas with a high water table for survival in southern California's desert climate. To help reduce the risk of fire ant

infestations: pick up after yourself & your pets, clean up all dishes (including your pet's), pick up animal waste daily, cover all trash cans, & make sure your hoses & sprinklers do not leak. These are all potential food sources for RIFA to survive. RIFA will eat plant pest! Maintaining your plants & keeping your plants pest free will help in reducing your risk of fire ant infestation. Avoid plants like crepe & myrtle, these plants often get infested with honeydew producing pest. Ants love the honeydew secreted by these insects. Planting low water using plants, hardscaping, or xeriscaping can greatly reduce your chances of a yard invasion.