



Ghost Ant

Tapinoma melanocephalum

Foraging

Characteristics: Tiny ant with dark head and pale gaster and legs, thorax often dark. May not look ant-like on casual inspection. Runs in quick, erratic movements when disturbed. Sometimes can be found trailing, where movement is more slow and deliberate. On close inspection some trailing workers can be seen carrying brood (larvae and pupae). Workers may emit acrid, coconut-like odor when crushed.



Most Common

Complaints: Foragers in kitchens and bathrooms on sinks, counters, and floors. Indoor colonies can be controlled with baits. Access of foragers entering from outdoors through cracks and crevices or screens should be restricted with barrier sprays.

Flight Season: Flightless queens.

Nest Sites & Characteristics: Multiple queens may be spread out into multiple subcolonies. Usually nest in disturbed areas, in flowerpots, under objects on the ground, under loose bark, and at the bases of palm fronds. Indoor nests in small spaces such as cracks, spaces between books, or wall voids. Indoor foragers often come from outside. This is a very common pest inside homes.

Distribution: Alachua, Brevard, Broward, Charlotte, Collier, Dade, Glades, Hendry, Hernando, Highlands, Hillsborough, Lee, Manatee, Martin, Monroe, Orange, Palm Beach, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, Seminole, St. Lucie, and Volusia Counties.

Diet: Scavenge for dead insects. Tend sap-sucking insects, collecting [honeydew](#). Forage for sweets and proteins in homes.

Detailed Description: 1.3-1.9 mm (1/20-1/14 in) long. One [petiolar](#) segment, no projecting scale. Four segments of [gaster](#) visible from above. Antennal [scape](#) exceeding posterior border of head. No sting. [Subfamily Dolichoderinae](#).

Origin: Old World tropics.

