

Ant Classification

Ants, and other organisms, are classified into what is called a taxonomic hierarchy. Each level of classification is called a taxon. Organisms within each taxon are more closely related to each other than those within the previous taxon. Starting with the highest taxonomic category and going down you will find that the classification gets more specific. Most taxa are further divided into sub- and supra-categories but we only present one, the sub-family, in the examples below.

	Common name
<u>Taxon</u>	Red Imported Fire Ant
Kingdom	Animalia: Examples - mollusks, worms, arthropods, fish, birds, reptiles, mammals.
Phylum	Arthropoda: Examples - crabs, shrimp, insects, spiders, scorpions, lobsters, ticks, mites, centipedes.
Class	Insecta: Examples - ants, beetles, flies, grasshoppers, butterflies, bees, wasps, dragonflies, termites, cicadas, aphids, fleas.
Order	Hymenoptera: Examples - bees, wasps, ants.
Family	Formicidae: ants
Sub-family	Myrmicinae: Examples - Acrobat ant, Bicolored trailing ant, Big-headed ant.
Genus*	<i>Solenopsis:</i> Examples - Red imported fire ant, Black imported fire ant, Southern fire ant.
Species*	<i>Solenopsis invicta</i>

* When written, genus and species names should always be italicized or underlined.

Here is a second example:

	Common name
<u>Taxon</u>	Ghost Ant
Kingdom	Animalia
Phylum	Arthropoda
Class	Insecta
Order	Hymenoptera
Family	Formicidae
Sub-family	Dolichoderinae: Examples - Argentine ant, Pyramid ant, White-footed ant.
Genus	<i>Tapinoma</i>: Examples - Ghost ant, Odorous house ant, <i>Tapinoma erraticum</i> **, <i>Tapinoma nigerrimum</i> **.
Species	<i>Tapinoma melanocephalum</i>

** Many species do not have a common name.