



The Voice

of the Volcano Community Association



April 2018

Watch Out for Little Fire Ants in Volcano

This is just a reminder for everyone in the greater Volcano area to be aware of the risk of moving little fire ants (LFA) from makai lands via virtually anything that has been in contact with the ground for a few weeks in lower Puna or Hilo districts and even elsewhere. There was a recent report of what appeared to be LFA in some purchased vegetables from the Volcano Farmer's Market but no specimens were kept so it is unconfirmed as yet. Potted plants are especially risky so do use the peanut butter on chopstick method (discussed more at littlefireants.com) to check pots as soon as you get home. Leave the stick in the pot for about 45 minutes, and keep the plant in a saucer of water (as a moat) if you have one so they won't escape over night! A few drops of dish detergent keeps them from getting across. You can drop frozen ant specimens off at the VCA table at the Farmer's Market on Sundays, just be sure your name and phone number are on the Ziploc!

If you think you might already have LFA infesting your property, email Pat Conant at vcainfo@yahoo.com for advice and he can confirm the identification for you.

The Hawaii Ant Lab is swamped with work on this island and even Kauai, Maui and Oahu now so don't count on them for help. But their website littlefireants.com is excellent and has all you need to know!

submitted by Pat Conant

When did LFA get here?

Since the discovery of *Wasmannia auropunctata* or Little Fire Ants, on the Big Island in 1999, the Hawaii Department of Agriculture has enacted quarantine regulations to prevent the shipment of potted plants infested with little fire ant from the Big Island to other islands. Additionally, the Hawaii Ant Lab (HAL) was established to address invasive ant species in Hawaii including little fire ants (LFA). Located in Hilo, HAL has developed innovative LFA control methods and works statewide to assist in management.

Description:

This ant is a uniform red-orange in color, all workers are 1.5 mm in length (half the size of a sesame seed, or as long as a penny is thick, about 1/16"). Little fire ant does NOT build mounded dirt nests, but nests in a variety of habitats including in trees, around potted plants, irrigation lines, and in electrical boxes. They are slow-moving and easily dislodged from leaves, plants, and trees, causing stings on neck, arms, and torso of people passing by.



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Volcano Community Association Mission Statement

To improve and protect the quality of life in Volcano, County and State of Hawaii, on behalf of all residents of the area. To promote the social and educational advancement, increase recreational opportunities, ensure health, protect natural environment, and develop community spirit. Also, it will undertake any consonant project the community may be moved to assign to it. However, it will remain nonpartisan and nonsectarian.

The Voice of the Volcano Community Association

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LFA are considered one of the World's 100 Worst Invasive Species (IUCN Invasive Species Specialist Group), because of their ability to reach very high numbers, to the point where people and animals can't avoid stings. Without the competition and predators that could keep their numbers in check, they are invading houses, yards, agricultural fields, and forests. www.stoptheant.org

Impacts of Little Fire Ants:

- Delivers a painful sting when disturbed. Welts can last for weeks.
- Infests agricultural fields and farms, where they damage crops and sting workers.
- Promotes plant pests such as aphids, white flies and scale insects, which secrete plant sap that the ants eat. In turn, the ants protect these insects from natural predators and parasites.
- Can also infest houses, beds, furniture and food. They may sting, and even blind, pets such as cats and dogs.*

taken from the website at dlnr.hawaii.gov/hisc/inf/invasive-species-profiles/little-fire-ant/



*"If pets sleep on the ground on infested property, at least that area of your property should be regularly disinfested according to the directions for outdoor areas on the labels of pesticides listed at littlefireants.com. Read the label and be sure that product can be used legally at that specific site, as you plan to! Keep pets and people out of that area for the time period required on the label of the pesticide." P. Conant

Above: Pets seem to be going blind in areas infested with Little Fire Ants.

Time to join or renew your membership? Please note new rates since 2017**

Membership Form -- Volcano Community Association

Name(s) _____

Mailing address _____

City _____ State _____ Zipcode _____

Email (important) _____

Phone(s) _____ (day) _____ (eve) _____ (cell)

Your information will be kept private and will only be used for VCA official business.

VCA is a Group of Volunteers serving the wider Community. We welcome your help! Please check your interests:

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 th of July | <input type="checkbox"/> VCA table at Farmers Market | <input type="checkbox"/> Volcano Long Range Plan |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising | <input type="checkbox"/> Misc. Grunt Work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter/Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Membership | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

** Annual dues (as of 2017) \$15 individual \$25 family (2 household members) \$ _____

Additional donation for printing and mailing of brochures and guidebooks, etc..... \$ _____

Membership Card Expires: _____ (office use only) Total amount received: \$ _____

Please make your check out to the Volcano Community Association, and send with this form to:
 Volcano Community Association, P.O. Box 600, Volcano, HI 96785
 You can also join or renew at www.volcanocommunity.org

Mahalo!