

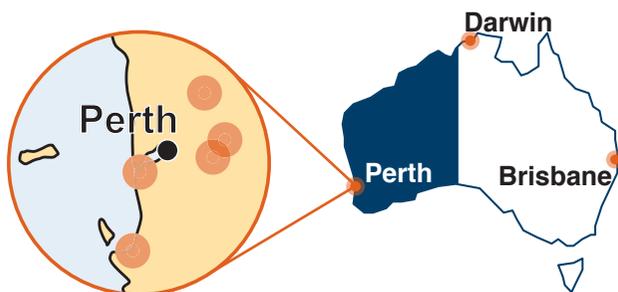
## Browsing ant

Browsing ants are about 3–4mm long and are slender, shiny and dark brown in appearance. They are often seen in large numbers and run about in a haphazard manner when disturbed. They do not have a strong ‘ant smell’ when crushed.

The browsing ant (*Lepisiota frauenfeldi*) is an invasive ant originating from southern Europe. Browsing ants thrive in Mediterranean and tropical climates, making them particularly suited to Western Australian conditions.

This aggressive ant forms super-colonies, quickly reaching high numbers. These super-colonies could put our native species at risk by killing them for food and competing for resources – disrupting WA’s delicate natural ecosystems.

Browsing ants have been detected in Darwin, Brisbane and Perth, but populations are still contained enough for eradication to be successful. In WA they were first discovered at Perth Airport in 2013. There have been further detections in Welshpool, Kewdale, Bayswater, Rockingham and Fremantle Port.



## How you can help

When requested, you can assist us by allowing surveillance officers to access your property to inspect for ants.

Our surveillance team will contact you prior to the inspection to let you know when they will be on site and to discuss any specific requirements.

You can also help us by keeping an eye out for any unusual ants or ant activity.

If you suspect you have browsing ants at your property or workplace, you can report it via: MyPestGuide:

- App: **MyPestGuide™ Reporter**  
Website: [mypestguide.agric.wa.gov.au](http://mypestguide.agric.wa.gov.au)



To the department’s Pest and Disease Information Service:

- Phone: **(08) 9368 3080**  
Email: [padis@dpird.wa.gov.au](mailto:padis@dpird.wa.gov.au)

### Important disclaimer

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# WA browsing ant surveillance



The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) is currently conducting surveillance and treatment for browsing ant at targeted properties across Western Australia.

**Your support will help us keep this pest out of WA.**

[agric.wa.gov.au/  
biosecurity/browsing-ants](http://agric.wa.gov.au/biosecurity/browsing-ants)

## Keep browsing ant out of WA

The browsing ant is an invasive pest that has not yet established in WA, but has been detected at WA locations associated with imported cargo in recent years.

Browsing ants can easily spread by 'hitchhiking' in cargo, shipping containers and machinery. In particular, it can be moved in soil, mulch, fertiliser and other plant material.

If browsing ant is allowed to spread throughout WA, it could severely impact the local environment, horticulture growers and Australia's outdoor lifestyle.

DPIRD is conducting ongoing surveillance at locations that are most at-risk for unknowingly spreading the ant, especially locations associated with transport, recycling, green waste, mining and tourism.



### How we look for pest ants

There are over 1300 known species of native ants in Australia so finding a browsing ant is like looking for a needle in a haystack. To find them, we must survey and collect samples of as many ants as possible for our entomologists to identify.

We look in garden beds, under tree bark, along fences lines, and under and around pot plants, rocks, logs and machinery for ants. We also look for any mounds, disturbed ground or small holes that could be an ant nest.

Samples of ants found are collected with tweezers and put into sample vials.



Sometimes we use lures to attract ants. A mixture of fats and carbohydrates is placed into a large vial on the ground and left for an hour. Ants are then attracted to this mixture and can be collected.

Sample and lure vials are taken to DPIRD Diagnostics and Laboratory Services (DDLs) in South Perth, where they are identified by our entomologists using a microscope. Ants of interest are sent off for further genetic testing to try to establish their place or country of origin.