

# A Guide To Their Identification, Biology and Control

## Pest Rating System



Mild annoyance; occasionally seen around home or garden, but does not cause damage



Nuisance; often around the home or garden providing some irritation



Often encountered around the home and garden; may cause some damage



Problematic; interrupts daily activities, may damage home or garden

### Sizes

Very Small ..... 2 mm or less

Small ..... 2-4 mm

Medium ..... 4-6 mm

Large ..... 6-8 mm

Very Large ..... 8 mm or more



Many species of ants are polymorphic (ants of different sizes found within the same colony or foraging trail). Colonies of red imported fire ants (shown here) may contain major and minor workers and many sizes between. Here a queen is protected and groomed by her workers.

# Elongate Twig Ant

# *Pseudomyrmex gracilis*

## Diagnostic Characters:

**Body elongate and slender.** Eyes are large and extremely obvious; ocelli are present. The antennae are 12-segmented, with the scapes usually short and never reaching the occipital border of the head. In the field, they are wasp-like in regard to locomotion and antennation; this species makes short jerky movements and is constantly beating their antennae. A large bicolored species with a black and orange pattern; the head and gaster are mostly black; the mesosoma, petiole and postpetiole are mostly orange with restricted black areas.

## Quick Diagnosis:

- Elongate body
- 2-segmented petiole
- Large eyes
- Very wasp-like in locomotion
- Bicolored yellow-orange and black



## Looks Like:

This species resembles three other species of *Pseudomyrmex* in Louisiana. The other species are all smaller and are just one color, either yellow or dark brown. The other species may be encountered around the home, but they do not inflict a painful sting and are not considered pestiferous. Outside the related species, this species should not be confused with any other ant in Louisiana.

## Biology:

The colonies are small and found in plant cavities or in dead plants of numerous species. This species is considered to be monogynous (only one queen). Reproductive flights for this species occur from early to midsummer. The elongate twig ant is a non-native ant that was introduced into Florida and then spread into Louisiana. Elongate twig ants feed on other insects as well as on honeydew from homopterous insects. This species is often encountered on vegetation when yard work is being done or while the ant is out foraging. They can inflict a painful sting.

## Pest Ratings in Louisiana



## Treatment:

Not harmful in yard except occasionally when one stings a human. Avoiding individual ants is the best measure.

**TWO NODES, ELONGATE WITH LARGE EYES**