

# Red Fire Ants

## Fire Ants - What are they?

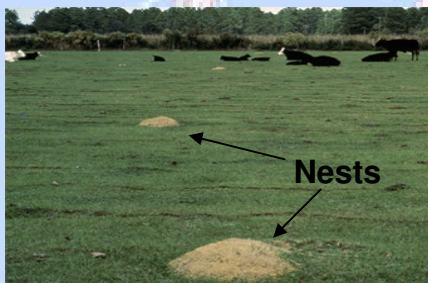
Fire Ants are serious pests. They have now been found in Tin Shui Wai, Yuen Long. They cause a painful sting. By the time they sting, there may be tens or hundreds of ants on your body. They pose a serious danger to our lifestyle and the environment if not eliminated.

## What do they look like?

Fire ants look very much like ordinary house or garden ants.

### Fire ants:

- Are small
- Are coppery-brown in color on the head and body, with a darker abdomen
- Come in a variety of sizes within one nest, ranging from 2mm to 6 mm. This is an unique characteristic of fire ants
- Have nests with no clear entry or exit holes on top of them
- Can be found out by their aggressive behavior, especially near the nest



Fire ant colonies are basically of two types: those with only one queen and those with more than one fertile queen. Mature fire ant colonies can contain 200 000 to 400 000 workers.

Their nests can appear as dome-shaped mounds, up to 40cm high, or underneath other objects found on the ground, such as timber and rocks. Mounds are usually found in open areas such as along roadsides and unused farmland. Mounds are seldom found in frequently cultivated areas.

## About the sting

Fire ants have a sting in their tail, similar to bees. However, unlike bees, fire ants can sting repeatedly. Stings from fire ants can cause a painful, burning and itching feeling, which can last for an hour. The feeling made by multiple stings is that the body is on fire; so, the name fire ant.

## First aid

Apply a cold compress or ice as soon as possible to the affected areas to reduce swelling and reduce pain. To prevent secondary infection, wash the affected areas gently with soap and water and be careful not to break them.



## Read and Write:

Antoine is the expert of Red Fire Ants working in a local Pest Control Company. Her friend, Freddy, who lives in Tuen Mun worries about his safety. Please read the above information and answer his questions.

Freddy: Why are Red Fire Ants called “Red Fire Ants” but not other names?

Antoine: It is a very good question. As you can see, the color of Red Fire Ants is \_\_\_\_\_. When we were stung by them, our bodies seem to be \_\_\_\_\_. Therefore, they are named \_\_\_\_\_.

Freddy: I am so worried now because Red Fire Ants are everywhere. Antoine, do you know how do Red Fire Ants look like?

Antoine: Don't worry, Freddy. Red Fire ants are not that terrible as you think of. Indeed, Red Fire Ants are \_\_\_\_\_ in size. They are \_\_\_\_\_ in color on head and body, with a \_\_\_\_\_ abdomen. Their sizes range from \_\_\_\_\_ mm to \_\_\_\_\_ mm.

Freddy: How many Red Fire Ants are there in a nest?

Antoine: Normally, apart from the King and the Queen, there are \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ workers in the nest.

Freddy: How do I know whether there is a Red Fire Ant nest around my home or not?

Antoine: It is very easy to discover the nest. It is like \_\_\_\_\_ which is usually found on the \_\_\_\_\_. The nest can appear up to \_\_\_\_\_ high. The nests are normally found in \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ but not in \_\_\_\_\_.

Freddy: What will be the consequence of being stung by Red Fire Ants?

Antoine: The sting in Red Fire Ants' tails is like the one in \_\_\_\_\_. Their difference is that Bee can sting once only whereas Red Fire Ants can sting \_\_\_\_\_. The consequence made by stings is that you will have a \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ feeling.

Freddy: What should I do if I was stung by Red Fire Ants?

Antoine: First, You should keep calm. In order to reduce \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, you should apply \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ to the affected areas. In order to prevent secondary infection, remember to use \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to wash the affected areas.

## Read and Write: (Answers)

Antoine is the expert of Red Fire Ants working in a local Pest Control Company. Her friend, Freddy, who lives in Tuen Mun worries about his safety. Please read the above information and answer his questions.

Freddy: Why are Red Fire Ants called “Red Fire Ants” but not other names?

Antoine: It is a very good question. As you can see, the color of Red Fire Ants is **Red**. When we were stung by them, our bodies seem to be **on fire**. Therefore, they are named **Fire ant**.

Freddy: I am so worried now because Red Fire Ants are everywhere. Antoine, do you know how do Red Fire Ants look like?

Antoine: Don't worry, Freddy. Red Fire ants are not that terrible as you think of. Indeed, Red Fire Ants are **small** in size. They are **Coppery-brown** in color on head and body, with a **darker** abdomen. Their sizes range from **2** mm to **6** mm.

Freddy: How many Red Fire Ants are there in a nest?

Antoine: Normally, apart from the King and the Queen, there are **200,000** to **400,000** workers in the nest.

Freddy: How do I know whether there is a Red Fire Ant nest around my home or not?

Antoine: It is very easy to discover the nest. It is like **dome-shaped mounds** which is usually found on the **ground**. The nest can appear up to **40cm** high. The nests are normally found in **unused farmlands** and **along roadsides** but not in **frequently cultivated areas**.

Freddy: What will be the consequence of being stung by Red Fire Ants?

Antoine: The sting in Red Fire Ants' tails is like the one in **bees**. Their difference is that Bees can sting once only whereas Red Fire Ants can sting **repeatedly**. The consequence made by stings is that you will have a **painful**, **burning** and **itching** feeling.

Freddy: What should I do if I was stung by Red Fire Ants?

Antoine: First, You should keep calm. In order to reduce **swelling** and **pain**, you should apply **cold compress** or **ice** to the affected areas. In order to prevent secondary infection, remember to use **soap** and **water** to wash the affected areas.

## Assignment 2B: Reading Task

### “Red Fire Ants”

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#### The reading task:

Antoine is the expert of Red Fire Ants working in a local Pest Control Company. With her professionalism, she is explaining the biology of Red Fire Ant and the consequence after being stung by these ants to her friend, Freddy. Students will complete the blank of the conversation with reference to the above article.

#### New vocabulary items:

<b>Noun</b>	Colonies, Dome shaped mounds, infection, Pest, abdomen, tails, cold compress
<b>Adjective</b>	Aggressive, itching, swelling, painful, a variety of, unique, multiple
<b>Verb</b>	Pose, sting, eliminate
<b>Preposition</b>	Underneath

#### Pre-Reading Activity:

1. Ask students if they know anything about the insects such as ants.
2. Ask students if they have heard of Red Fire Ants before.
3. Use their imagination to describe how Red Fire Ants look like.
4. Explain the task to students. Ask them to read the passage and complete the task.