

# *Anoplolepis gracilipes*

## SYSTEM

Terrestrial

## COMMON NAMES

English: yellow crazy ant; crazy ant; long-legged ant

Indonesia: gramang ant

## DESCRIPTION

*Anoplolepis gracilipes* is one of the largest invasive ants and are typically small to medium-sized and range from 1-2mm, like *Wasmannia auropunctata*, to more than 5mm (Holway et al. 2002). The ant, also known as the long-legged ant, is notable for its remarkably long legs and antennae. *A. gracilipes* workers are monomorphic, displaying no physical differentiation (Holway et al. 2002). It has a yellow-brownish body colour, and is weakly sclerotized. Workers have a long slender gracile body, with the gaster usually darker than the head and thorax. It may subdue or kill invertebrate prey or small vertebrates by spraying formic acid.

## NATIVE RANGE

ASEAN: Brunei Darussalam; Cambodia; Indonesia; Malaysia; Myanmar; Philippines; Singapore; Thailand; Viet Nam

WORLD: China; India; Sri Lanka

## KNOWN INTRODUCED RANGE

ASEAN: Brunei Darussalam; Indonesia; Malaysia

WORLD: American Samoa; Australia; Caroline Islands; Chile; China; Christmas Island; Cook Islands; Fiji; French Polynesia; Guam; Hong Kong; India; Japan; Kiribati; Marshall Islands; Mauritius; Mexico; Micronesia, Federated States Of; New Caledonia; New Zealand; Niue; Northern Mariana Islands; Palau; Papua New Guinea; Reunion; Samoa; Seychelles; Solomon Islands; South Africa; Taiwan; Tanzania, United Republic Of; Tokelau; Tonga; Tuvalu; United States; United States Minor Outlying Islands; Vanuatu; Wallis And Futuna

## PATHWAY

Transport - Container/bulk; Contaminant nursery material; Food contaminant; Hitchhikers in or on plane; Hitchhikers on ship/boat; Machinery/equipment; Organic packing material; Timber trade; Transportation of habitat material; Vehicles

## REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Transported in road vehicles, machinery, boats, and aircraft. Transported in packaging material, timber. Translocated in soil, produce and timber. Transported in soil and produce. Transported in soil, packaging materials, pallets. Deliberate introductions for biological control of plant pests on coconut, coffee and cacao plantations. Transported

in goods, packaging, pallets in container. *Anoplolepis gracilipes* has entered Australian ports in sea cargo containers in Cairns and Brisbane, Queensland, Australia and been intercepted in Fremantle, Western Australia. Translocated in soil, produce and timber. Transported in soil, packaging materials, pallets.

## IMPACTS

*Anoplolepis gracilipes* (so called because of their frenetic movements) have invaded native ecosystems and caused environmental damage from Hawaii to the Seychelles and Zanzibar. On Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean, they have formed multi-queen supercolonies. They are also decimating the red land crab (*Gecarcoidea natalis*) populations. Crazy ants also prey on, or interfere in, the reproduction of a variety of arthropods, reptiles, birds and mammals on the forest floor and canopy. Their ability to farm and protect sap-sucking scale insects, which damage the forest canopy on Christmas Island, is one of their more surprising attributes. Although less than 5% of the rainforest on Christmas Island has been invaded so far, scientists are concerned that endangered birds such as the Abbott's booby (*Sula abbotti*), which nests nowhere else in the world, could eventually be driven to extinction through habitat alteration and direct attack by the ants.

Global Invasive Species Database (2020) Species profile: *Anoplolepis gracilipes*.  
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