

Little Fire Ant fact sheet 3

Checking your property for Little Fire Ants

Surveying your property for Little Fire Ants is easy – and fun! If you have children, get them involved too. The easiest way is to use the HDOA “chopstick” method. LFA just LOVE peanut butter – I think they might have shares in the Reese’s company!

It doesn’t matter what brand you use, but smooth or creamy types are the best. Smear some chopsticks (cut in half), popsicle sticks, or coffee stirrers with a very thin layer of peanut butter and leave these out in places where LFA might be.



In the leaf axil of a banana is a great place! Choose older leaves that no longer hold water after rain



On the ground in a shady spot like this. Brush away debris and litter first.

You will notice in the pictures above that we have painted the chopsticks red. This is to make them easier to find later on but its not essential to do this. Wait for about 1 hour then carefully check the sticks to see if ants have found them. Look at the images below to see what little fire ants would look like on the chopsticks.



If you see ants on the chopstick like in the images above, drop the stick into a zip-lock bag, place in the freezer overnight and mail them to:

C. Vanderwoude
Hawaii Department of Agriculture
16 E. Lanikaula St Hilo, 96720

Don't forget to include your contact information please!

Some tips for a better survey –

- LFA like shady moist places – always try to place the lures out of the sun
- If you have a banana patch, place at least some lures in these. The best location is where the older leaves join onto the stem, as well as in the trash at the base of the plant. There is an image in the presentation showing the best spot.
- LFA are VERY small, a uniform orange color, and walk fairly slowly. If the ants you see are black, or fast moving, or are more than one color, they probably are not LFA.

“Quickie” survey

Don't have much time? That's ok, think about doing a “quickie” survey. Just place a chopstick or 2 in your bananas like the picture above. If you don't have a banana clump, place a chopstick or 2 at the base of any palm or coconut on the property. Just make sure the chopstick is on the shady side of the plant.

“Gold Standard” survey

Have a bit more time? Then place 4-6 chopsticks total in shady places around your yard, along the northern wall of your house, or your banana clump.

“Platinum Standard” survey

If you want to be absolutely sure you don't have little fire ants, then place a chopstick every 10-15 feet over all shady parts of your yard. This type of survey will take a bit longer but will give you the most accurate results.

Want more information?

go to www.littlefireants.com

Or contact
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