



HARVESTER ANTS

Photo: Manuel Vasquez

AVOID HARVESTER ANT MOUNDS IN THE SELECTION OF PROJECT SPECIFIC LOCATIONS (PSLs)

Harvester ants (*Pogonomyrmex barbatus*) can be found on many TxDOT construction sites. Contractors and crew members should strive to maintain their habitat undisturbed as these represent a major source of food for the state-listed threatened Texas horned lizard (*Phrynosoma cornutum*).



Photo: Edd Paradise

Harvester ants can be easily identified from other ants by their large size; they can grow to as much as a one half inch. A single colony can house approximately 10,000 ants. Each colony contains three types of individuals: the queen, “alates” or “reproductives” (males and females that will leave the colony to reproduce), and sterile female workers.

The queen has a lifespan of 15–20 years during which she produces an average of 10,000 workers per year. The sterile female workers share duties in maintaining the nest, tending to the queen, and gathering and administering the food. The alates are special winged female and male ants that the queen produces. Their sole purpose is to mate and reproduce.

Harvester ants feed primarily on grass seed and their mound is typically located on a circular section of bare soil from which all grass has been cleared by them. In a well established colony, the mother mound connects to foraging zones through small trails that ants use to travel back and forth between zones.



Photo: Manuel Vasquez

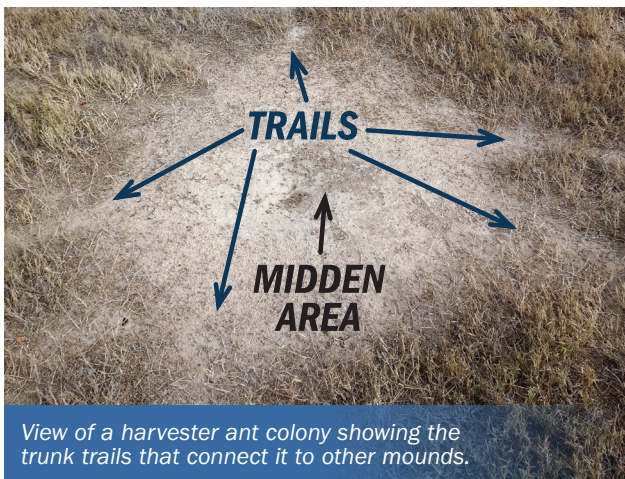


Photo: Manuel Vasquez



Source: TPWD Management of the Red Harvester Ant
(*Pogonomyrmex barbatus*)