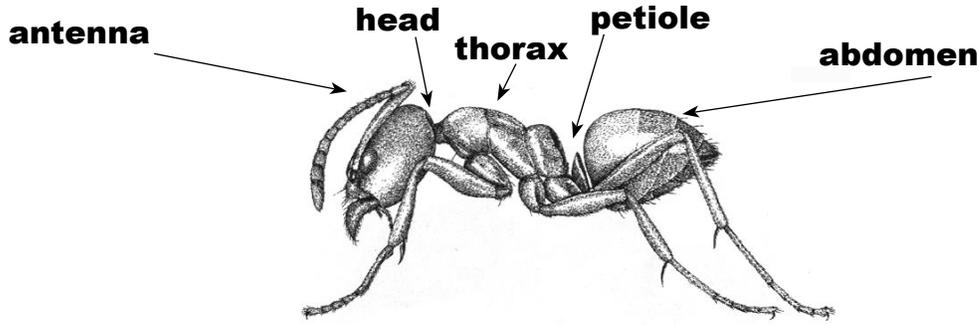


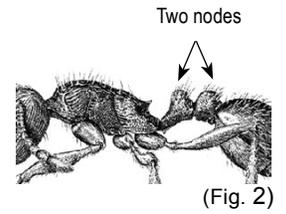
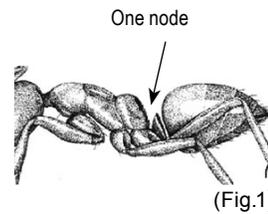
# Key to Identifying Common Household Ants

This key includes nine of the most common ant species that are most likely to be a nuisance around California homes and structures. Many other ant species occur in California, but most are not home invaders.

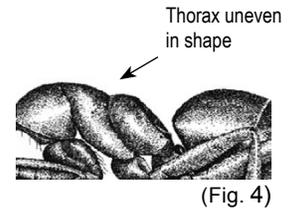
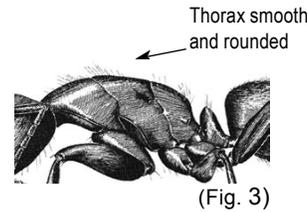


## One-node Ants

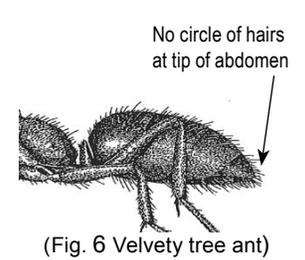
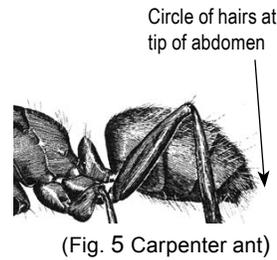
- 1A.** Ant with one node on petiole (Fig. 1)  
 .....Go to step 2
- 1B.** Ant with two nodes on petiole (Fig. 2)  
 .....Go to step 5



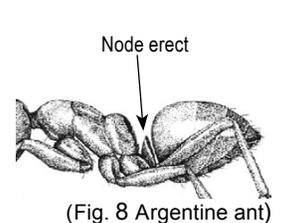
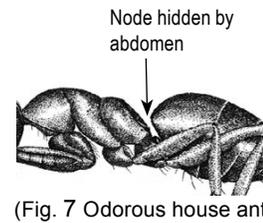
- 2A.** Thorax is smooth and evenly rounded when viewed from the side (Fig. 3)  
 .....Go to step 3
- 2B.** Thorax is uneven in shape when viewed from the side (Fig. 4)  
 .....Go to step 4



- 3A.** Large, up to 1/2 inch long; black or reddish to dark brown; circle of hairs present on the tip of the abdomen (Fig. 5)  
 .....**Carpenter ant**
- 3B.** 1/8 to 1/4 inch long; brownish-black head, red thorax, and velvety black abdomen; no circle of hairs at tip of abdomen (Fig. 6)  
 .....**Velvety tree ant**



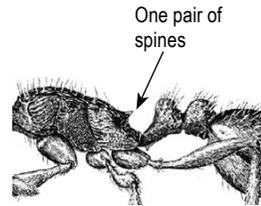
- 4A.** Node hidden by abdomen; dark brown to shiny-black in color; gives off a strong odor when crushed (Fig. 7)  
 .....**Odorous house ant**
- 4B.** Node erect; dull brown in color; gives off a musty odor when crushed (Fig. 8)  
 .....**Argentine ant**



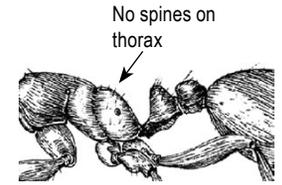
# Key to Identifying Common Household Ants (continued)

## Two-node Ants

**5A.** One pair of spines on thorax (Fig. 9)  
 .....*Pavement ant*



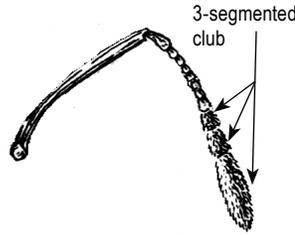
(Fig. 9 Pavement ant)



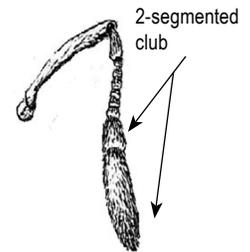
(Fig. 10)

**5B.** No spines on thorax (Fig. 10)  
 .....*Go to step 6*

**6A.** 12-segmented antenna ending with 3-segmented club (Fig. 11)  
 .....*Pharaoh ant*



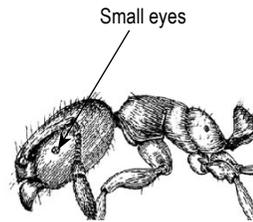
(Fig. 11 Pharaoh ant)



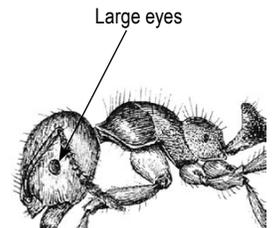
(Fig. 12)

**6B.** 10-segmented antenna ending with 2-segmented club (Fig. 12)  
 .....*Go to step 7*

**7A.** Very small eyes; worker ants are all the same size, tiny, 1/32 inch long; yellow to light brown in color (Fig. 13)  
 .....*Thief ant*



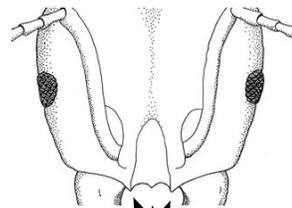
(Fig. 13 Thief ant)



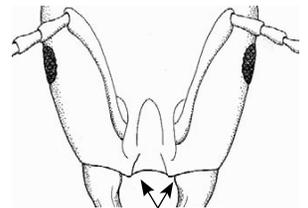
(Fig. 14)

**7B.** Large eyes; worker ants are variable in size, 1/16 to 1/4 inch long; reddish to orange-brown in color with some black markings on the abdomen (Fig. 14)  
 .....*Go to step 8*

**8A.** 3 small teeth on the front of the head; more prominent on larger workers (Fig. 15)  
 .....*Red imported fire ant\**

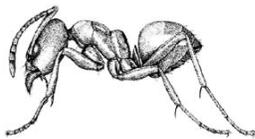


Three small teeth  
 (Fig. 15 Red imported fire ant)\*



Two small teeth  
 (Fig. 16 Southern fire ant)

**8B.** 2 small teeth on the front of the head; more prominent on larger workers (Fig. 16)  
 .....*Southern fire ant*



**Argentine ant**  
 (1/8 inch)



**Carpenter ant**  
 (1/4—1/2 inch)



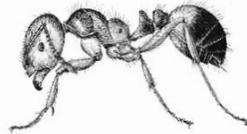
**Odorous house ant**  
 (1/8 inch)



**Pavement ant**  
 (3/16 inch)



**Pharaoh ant**  
 (1/16 inch)



**Red imported fire ant\***  
 (1/16—1/5 inch)



**Southern fire ant**  
 (1/8—1/4 inch)



**Thief ant**  
 (1/32 inch)



**Velvety tree ant**  
 (1/8—1/4 inch)

\*Red imported fire ant is not common and is an invading pest. Report suspected infestations to your county Agricultural Commissioner. For management information for other species, see the Ant Pest Note on the UC IPM Web site at [www.ipm.ucdavis.edu](http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu).