
BIGHEADED ANT/BROWN HOUSE ANT/COASTAL BROWN ANT

Pheidole megacephala / *Pheidole rugosula*

Common name(s) Big-headed ant. Also known as brown house-ant, coastal brown-ant, lion ant, African Big-headed ant



Workers are different sizes and major workers have exceptionally large heads; are 1.5 – 6 mm long, yellowish to dark reddish brown in color and have 12-segmented antennae with a three-segmented club

Occasionally invades structures and nests under slabs, but usually nests in soil around structures

Can sting and emit a foul odor when alarmed

Length 3.5 mm; head massive with the rear (occipital) margin deeply impressed in the middle; rugae (wrinkles in the cuticle) extending about half way from the clypeus to the rear margin of the head; propodeal spines (paired) longer than diameter of propodeal spiracle; colour light brown.

Most of New Zealand is probably too cold for this species to realise its full pest potential, but the far north could support populations if it is transported there. Large populations have also been reported on the Kermadecs .

It currently appears to be restricted to coastal suburbs of Auckland, although it is likely that coastal areas north of Auckland would also be suitable.

Can be abundant around urban areas causing a nuisance. Workers are attracted to pet food left out and windfall fruit. It has been sampled in native habitats but its impacts are unknown.