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Tiny Brown Ant

*Monomorium antipodum*



*M antipodum* shows an arc of distribution, beginning in the far north and extending through the east of the North Island to Wellington and Nelson provinces; a clear southern limit is indicated. There is an isolated record from New Plymouth in Taranaki.

Length about 1.6 mm; antennae 11-segmented with a 3-segmented club; mandibles 4-toothed; metanotal groove deeply impressed; colour of body reddish-brown, antennae yellow, tibiae and femora brown.

This species is small and non-aggressive. Similar sized species in Australia are generalist scavengers. It has been observed feeding on dead insects and dried Argentine ant baits long after other ants have stopped foraging, supporting its likely scavenger status. It is often sampled in coastal vegetation or in forest margins, but there are very few collection records from forest, unlike many of our other native ants. Also, unlike other native ants, this species frequently enters buildings. This may indicate that the species is a disturbance specialist.

It is attracted to protein and sugar baits, and caught in pitfall traps.

It is commonly encountered in buildings in some parts of the country and will turn up in bathrooms and kitchens. Trails can be seen to dead insects on window sills and occasionally

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it will infest sugar bowls and other food. It is a species about which householders commonly ask for advice on control.