



ANT

IDENTIFICATION CHART

KC METRO

01/10

2026 EDITION

Know the species. Spot the signs. Get the right treatment – the first time.

#1 ANT CALL IN KC

Odorous house ant

Tiny, dark, coconut smell when crushed – and famous for coming back after DIY sprays.

ANT SEASON · KC METRO

March – November

Indoor colonies stay active all winter.

J F M A M J J A S O N D

MOISTURE WARNING

Carpenter & acrobat ants

Inside walls they usually mean a leak or wet wood – find the moisture, not just the ants.

SKIP THE SPRAY

Baits beat repellents

Store sprays scatter odorous house & pharaoh colonies into new nests (budding).

1

**ODOROUS HOUSE ANT***Tapinoma sessile*

1/16-1/8" NUISANCE

- Dark brown-black; rotten-coconut smell when crushed
- Long trails to sweets, grease and moisture
- Many queens – colonies split when disturbed

Where: Kitchens, baths, wall voids, under mulch & stones

2

**PAVEMENT ANT***Tetramorium immigrans*

1/8" NUISANCE

- Dark brown-black; fine grooves on head & thorax
- Sand piles in sidewalk cracks & slab joints
- Spring "sidewalk wars" between colonies

Where: Driveways, patios, slab foundations, garages

3

**CARPENTER ANT***Camponotus pennsylvanicus*

1/4-1/2" WOOD DAMAGE

- Largest ant in KC; black, smooth rounded thorax
- Hollows out damp or damaged wood (doesn't eat it)
- Sawdust-like frass; forages at night

Where: Window frames, decks, soffits, wet wall voids, tree hollows

4

**ACROBAT ANT***Crematogaster* spp.

1/8" MOISTURE FLAG

- Heart-shaped abdomen lifted over the body when alarmed
- Trails along wires & tree limbs to the roofline
- Nests in wet wood, foam insulation, old galleries

Where: Soffits, window frames, wall voids with moisture

5

**PHARAOH ANT***Monomorium pharaonis*

1/16" HARD TO CONTROL

- Yellow to amber with a darker abdomen tip
- Active indoors year-round; huge multi-queen colonies
- Sprays make it worse – bait-only treatment

Where: Kitchens, baths, apartments, hospitals & commercial kitchens

6

**FIELD ANT***Formica* spp.

1/8-3/8" OUTDOOR

- Black, red-and-black or brown; notched (uneven) thorax
- Builds soil mounds in lawns and along foundations
- Often mistaken for carpenter ants; can bite

Where: Lawns, landscape beds, foundation edges, mulch

7

**LITTLE BLACK ANT***Monomorium minimum*

1/16" NUISANCE

- Tiny, jet-black and shiny; slow-moving trails
- Nests under stones, in woodwork and wall voids
- Feeds on sweets, grease and other insects

Where: Kitchens, patios, under siding and landscape stone

**NOT SURE WHICH ANT?**

Snap a clear photo, note where you saw it, and text it to us. A licensed pro identifies it – free.

(913) 738-STAR
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! SIGNS OF AN ANT PROBLEM**TRAILS**

Steady lines of ants moving between food, water and the nest.

**SWARMERS**

Winged ants indoors point to a colony inside the structure.

**FRASS**

Sawdust-like piles under wood = carpenter ant activity.

**WET AREAS**

Ants at sinks, tubs, windows or wall voids signal moisture.

**MOUNDS**

Soil mounds along the foundation, walks and lawn edges.

? ANT OR TERMITE SWARMER?**FLYING ANT**

- Elbowed (bent) antennae
- Pinched waist
- Front wings longer than back wings

**TERMITE SWARMER**

- Straight, beaded antennae
- Thick waist, no pinch
- Four equal wings, shed easily

Both swarm in KC every spring. Termite swarmers indoors mean an active colony – call the same day.

KC FIELD NOTE Fire ants are not established in the Kansas City area – most "fire ant" calls turn out to be field ants or pavement ants. Also common here: larger yellow (citronella) ants, which swarm from basements and slab cracks in late winter and are often mistaken for termites, and thief ants (tiny, yellowish, in pantries).



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