



VARMINT GUARD®

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Common Name: **Odorous house ant**
Scientific Name: **Tapinoma sessile**

ODOROUS HOUSE ANT



Introduction: The pungent, rotten coconut-like odor given off when this ant is crushed gives it its name. It is a native species and is found throughout the United States.

Recognition. Odorous house ant workers are 1/8 inch long and are brown to black in color. The thorax profile is unevenly rounded. The waist (pedicel) portion of the abdomen is 1-segmented (one node) and cannot be seen from above because it attaches beneath the front of the gaster. These ants do not sting or bite; however, the workers emit a disagreeable, rotten coconut-like odor when crushed.

Similar Ants. The small honey ant and the Argentine ant have the node visible, not hidden by the gaster. Other small dark ants have a 2-segmented pedicel and/or lack the characteristic rotten coconut odor when crushed.

Biology. Colonies may be comprised of several hundred to 10,000 ants. There are usually many queens in a colony. Development time (egg to adult) is 34-83 days, varying with temperature during summer months, and up to 6-7 months during the winter. Colonies typically produce 4 to 5 generations a year. Although they probably mate both inside and outside the nest, the first swarmers appear from May to mid-July. The workers and queens live for several years. Individuals from different colonies are not hostile to one another and workers normally move along trails.



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Habits. Inside, these ants usually construct their nests behind siding, brick veneer and stucco, in wall voids, especially around hot water pipes and heaters, in crevices around sinks, cupboards, etc. These ants prefer sweets but also eat foods with high protein content and grease such as meats and cheese.

Outside, they are often found in the nest of larger ants, in exposed soil, but mostly under objects. Workers feed on insects, seek honeydew and plant secretions, and even feed on seeds. They are extremely fond of honeydew and attend such honeydew-excreting insects as aphids, scale insects, mealy bugs, etc. They are most likely to enter buildings when their honeydew supply is reduced such as during rainy weather or with leaf fall in the autumn.

Cultural Control & Preparatory Measures. Quickly clean up food (including pet food) and beverage spills from floors, counters, porches and decks to discourage foraging by these ants indoors and near residences/buildings. Food items should be stored in airtight containers, if possible.

Professional Control. Location of the nest(s) is crucial; therefore a Varmant Guard technician will strive to accomplish this by following the trail of foraging workers back from the food source. Insecticide baits and dusts will be strategically placed into the voids of outside ground-floor walls and infested interior walls.

A residual insecticide perimeter (barrier) treatment will be applied along the foundation exterior. Additional Insecticide baiting may be performed among landscaping features on the premises.



Female winged (alate) odorous house ant.



Male winged (alate) odorous house ant.