FACTSHEET

BIOSECURITY SA – Plant Health

October 2017

Call the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline **1800 084 881** (available 24 hours)

BIOSECURITY SA
**PIRSA**

# Browsing Ants

## *Lepisiota frauenfeldi*

The Browsing Ant, *Lepisiota frauenfeldi* is an ant-eating species that forms super-colonies that can displace native ant species and most other invertebrates in the area of infestation.

The first known Australian detection was at Perth Airport in 2013 followed by detection at a commercial property in Belmont, a suburb of Perth in August 2014.

Browsing Ants were found on adjoining properties within the vicinity of the Darwin seaport in July 2015 and subsequently at an industrial site in Berrimah an eastern suburb in the city of Darwin.

In February 2017, Browsing Ants were detected at a property in Welshpool an inner south eastern suburb of Perth.

The Australian Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (DAWR) is working with the Western Australian Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and the Northern Territory Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries to respond to the WA and NT detections.

### Description:

The Browsing Ant is exotic and has not established in Australia.

Browsing ants are a slender ant, and shiny uniform dark brown in colour. They are 3–4mm in length with long antennae and long legs, and run about in a crazy or haphazard manner when disturbed.

Browsing Ants are commonly found in Timor Leste and Malaysia.


Photo: Western Australian Department. of Primary Industry & Regional Development.

### Impact:

Browsing Ants can form multi-queened, super colonies and eat and displace native ant species, as well as other insects. They are not harmful to humans.

The colonies can cause damage to plants and landscaping.

The Browsing Ant is a homopteran-tending species which 'farm' pests such as aphids, mealy bugs and scale insects, and so would become significant horticultural and garden pests

### Report browsing ants:

If you think you have seen a Browsing Ant population, contact the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline: 1800 084 881.

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