



# NCDA&CS

## Plant Industry Division Plant Protection Section

# PEST ALERT

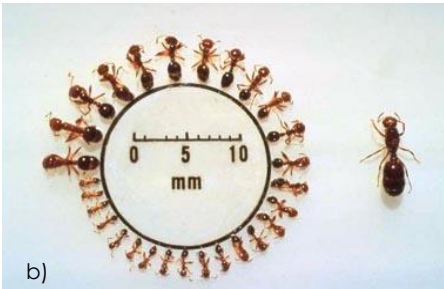
### Red Imported Fire Ant

*Solenopsis invicta* Buren 1972  
(Hymenoptera: Formicidae)



Mike Quinn, www.TexasEnto.net

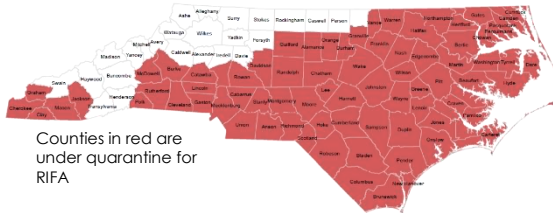
Red Imported Fire Ant (RIFA), *Solenopsis invicta* Buren, was first introduced to the United States via Mobile, Alabama in 1918. This pest has since spread throughout most of the southeastern U.S. including most of North Carolina. Eradication of this pest is unlikely at this point so research is focused on controlling the imported fire ant.



a) Red imported fire ant; b) Array of RIFA illustrating variation in size (workers on left; queen on right; Photo by S.D. Porter); c) RIFA mound in clay soil with "dome" shape; d) RIFA mound in sandy soil with irregular shape; e) RIFA biting and stinging a person (Photo by Alex Wild)

### IDENTIFICATION:

Adult red imported fire ants are red to dark brown in color and range in size from  $\frac{1}{8}$ " to  $\frac{1}{3}$ ". They have elbowed antennae with 10 segments on each antenna and two petioles (nodes) between the thorax and abdomen.



Counties in red are under quarantine for RIFA

### SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS:

RIFA mounds range in size from a few inches tall and wide to as large as 3+ feet in height and diameter; however, the average mound is about 15" in diameter and 10" in height. Depending on the soil type they can be dome-like in shape or, if the soil is sandy, irregular in shape. Fire ants are aggressive and if their mounds are disturbed, often hundreds of worker ants will swarm to out and begin biting and stinging.

### WHAT TO DO:

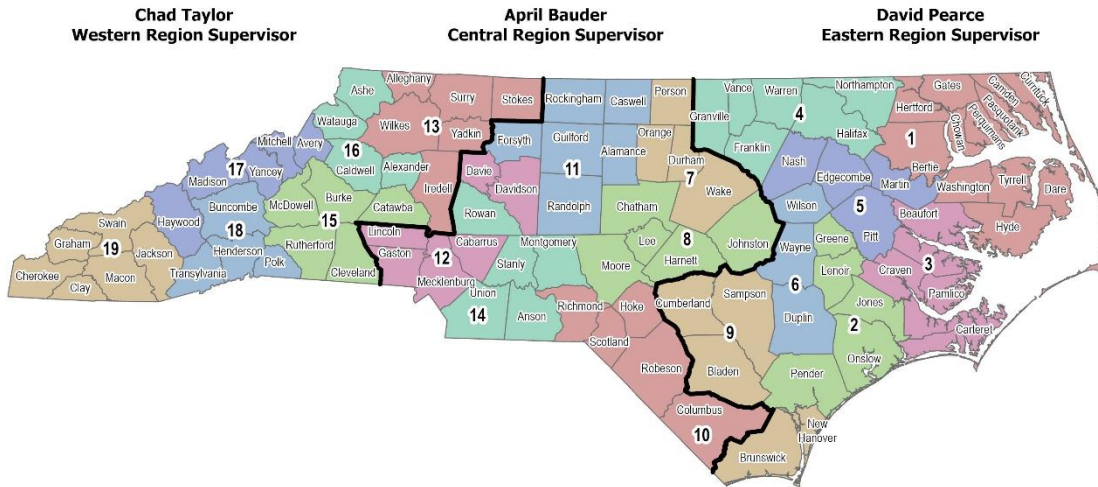
**Collect a specimen:** Specimens of any life stage may be submitted to the NCSU Insect and Disease Clinic for verification. Please contact your local plant pest specialist (contact information on back of this alert) for assistance with specimen submission.

**For treatment recommendations:** Please contact your local county extension agent (call 919-515-2813 or visit <https://www.ces.ncsu.edu/local-county-center/>).

**Report a site:** If you are located outside of the NC IFA quarantine area and suspect you have IFA, please contact Whitney Swink (919-707-3742 or [whitney.swink@ncagr.gov](mailto:whitney.swink@ncagr.gov)); your local plant pest specialist (contact information on back of this alert); or report your find to 800-206-9333 or [newpest@ncagr.gov](mailto:newpest@ncagr.gov).

**Note:** Long-range dispersal of IFA is assisted through movement of infested plant material (e.g. nursery root stock, sod, baled hay, straw and pine straw). Prior to moving plant material out of the IFA quarantine (see map above or visit: <http://www.ncagr.gov/plantindustry/plant/entomology/documents/ncifaquarantine.pdf>) please contact your local plant pest specialist for an inspection.

**NC Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services**  
**Plant Industry Division – Plant Protection Section**  
**Plant Pest Specialist Work Areas**



**Specialist's Names, Contact Information and Assigned Areas**

Area 1:	Bertie, Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Dare, Gates, Hertford, Hyde, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Tyrrell, Washington	Joe Davenport	(919) 608-0635
Area 2:	Greene, Jones, Lenoir, Onslow, Pender	Bonnie Faulkner	(252) 521-3180
Area 3:	Beaufort, Carteret, Craven, Pamlico	David Pearce	(252) 670-1742
Area 4:	Franklin, Granville, Halifax, Northampton, Vance, Warren	Derreck Long	(252) 567-1247
Area 5:	Edgecombe, Martin, Nash, Pitt	Juliet Whitehurst	(919) 218-1765
Area 6:	Duplin, Wayne, Wilson	Scott Cannady	(919) 270-4910
Area 7:	Durham, Orange, Person, Wake	April Bauder	(919) 777-3251
Area 8:	Chatham, Harnett, Johnston, Lee, Moore	Jensen McLamb	(910) 638-4943
Area 9:	Bladen, Brunswick, Cumberland, New Hanover, Sampson	Chris Carter	(919) 218-8654
Area 10:	Columbus, Hoke, Richmond, Robeson, Scotland	Michelle Shooter	(910) 734-3477
Area 11:	Alamance, Caswell, Forsyth, Guilford, Randolph, Rockingham	Andrew Allen	(336) 404-5873
Area 12:	Cabarrus, Davidson, Davie, Gaston, Mecklenburg, Lincoln	Heidi Humlicek	(406) 750-6432
Area 13:	Alleghany, Iredell, Stokes, Surry, Wilkes, Yadkin	Ginger Hemmings	(336) 314-9334
Area 14:	Anson, Montgomery, Rowan, Stanly, Union	Samuel Harris	(919) 604-3896
Area 15:	Burke, Catawba, Cleveland, McDowell, Rutherford	Amanda Cook	(828) 443-1289
Area 16:	Alexander, Ashe, Caldwell, Watauga	Chad Taylor	(336) 466-0478
Area 17:	Avery, Haywood, Madison, Mitchell, Yancey	Tim Hartley	(828) 260-0588
Area 18:	Buncombe, Henderson, Polk, Transylvania	Sue Dial	(828) 577-0915
Area 19:	Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Jackson, Macon, Swain	Ryan Holquist	(828) 421-5445

**Mailing Address: 1060 Mail Service Center, Raleigh NC 27699-1060**

**Physical Address: 216 West Jones Street, Raleigh NC 27603**

**Phone: (919) 707-3730 | Fax: (919) 733-1041**

Please visit our website at [www.ncagr.gov/plantindustry](http://www.ncagr.gov/plantindustry) for more information!