State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

New Pest Advisory No. 00-02
July 2001 (revision)

***Solenopsis* sp.** worker ant

A New Ant Found in Hawaii

Solenopsis sp.
(Hymenoptera: Formicidae)

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Introduction. Specimens of a tiny slow-moving, yellowish-brown ant were first collected from samples of seashore paspalum grass and soil from a golf course in Ewa, Oahu, in October 2000 by staff of the Hawaii Department of Agriculture (HDOA). The ants were identified as a species of *Solenopsis* new to Hawaii by Dr. N. Reimer (HDOA Plant Quarantine) and M.E. Chun, (HDOA Plant Pest Control). This ant is related to the imported fire ant, *Solenopsis invicta* Buren, an aggressive and serious pest of agricultural, urban, and native environments found in parts of the mainland U.S. but not in Hawaii (Reimer & Okada 1999). Two other *Solenopsis* species are found in Hawaii: *Solenopsis geminata* (Fabricius), the local fire ant, known for its painful stings and *Solenopsis papuana* Emery, a tiny dark brown species similar in size to the species described in this advisory.

Description. Workers of this *Solenopsis* sp. are yellowish with a light brown abdomen. They are just under 1 mm in length. Colonies are monomorphic (individuals of the same size and shape). Queens have not yet been found, but will be needed in order to identify the species.

Distribution. Infestations of this ant have been found at a site a mile away from the initial golf course collection site in Ewa, indicating that the ant has been established on Oahu for awhile. In January 2001, ant specimens, collected in Hilo and Hawaiian Acres earlier in May 2000, were also identified as *Solenopsis* sp.

Habitat. *Solenopsis* sp. ants are inconspicuous and not easily found. Foraging worker ants have been collected from the soil under seashore paspalum and other grasses, and under debris along a parking lot curb. Though they have stingers, no complaints on tiny stinging ants have been received from golf course players, personnel, or any Ewa Beach residents.

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Reference

Reimer, N.J. & C. Okada. 1999. Red Imported Fire Ant. in: Coll. Trop. Agric. & Human Res. publication on Insect Pests, IP-3.