

## **INVASIVE INSECT: Singapore Ant (*Monomorium destructor*)**

(Updated December 2008)

**DESCRIPTION:** A small ant, 2-3 millimeters in length. The head and body are orange-brown and the abdomen is black. They may nest underground, in wall spaces, in electrical conduits or in clothing and stored goods. They emerge from their nest during the day to forage for food. Singapore ants forage for food outdoors and indoors. Normally, the foraging ants move along scent trails so it appears they are following each other in a line. A typical foraging group of Singapore ants will contain two distinct sizes of ants in the foraging trail. Singapore ants tend to live around human settlements where they are a nuisance pest; however, they can be very destructive to fragile island habitats, such as atolls, where the ants have no natural enemies.



**THREAT:** Singapore ants are destructive pests that damage stored food, clothing and electrical systems. These ants inflict painful stings. They are known to tend scale insects and other plant pests. This can result in the death or poor health of native plants. Entire nests of Singapore ants are often transported in boxes of food or clothing without being noticed, resulting in widespread infestations. Singapore ants are a potential threat to native species of plants and animals.



**CURRENT STATUS:** Singapore ants are not widespread in Palau, but they have become a very serious problem in Hatohobei State (Helen Reef). They have been found in a few locations in Koror, and in 2008 they were found in Aimeliik, Melekeok, and Ngchesar. The Singapore ant is the target of an education and control campaign by the Bureau of Agriculture, with the support of the Belau National Museum and several other organizations and agencies. The campaign needs your support.

**WHAT YOU CAN DO:** Singapore ants are easily transported by people. You can help by being very careful when transporting anything that might contain ants, such as pot-plants, food, and household items. **It is very important that you seek expert advice if you believe you have an infestation of Singapore Ants. Please call BOA to confirm the infestation, record it, and advise you on how to deal with it. If you believe you have Singapore Ants, please call the Bureau of Agriculture at 488-2504.**