

USE AND EVALUATION OF ANT IDENTIFICATION WORKSHOPS FOR PEST MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONALS IN WASHINGTON, OREGON, AND BRITISH COLUMBIA

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Abstract Workshops on ant identification have been offered in Washington, Oregon, and British Columbia to pest management professionals since 1996 during with winter season. Number of workshops varies from 3 to 7 each year. Classes are nearly always filled to a capacity of 24 for each four-hour session. Each participant receives a preserved collection of approximately 20-25 ants in alcohol, keys for identification, a hand lens, plus information on biology, life cycles, and management on specific ants. Workshop sites are selected where each participant has access to a dissection microscope with lights, usually at universities or community colleges. Common local ants encountered in pest management are presented as well as exotic or tramp species that have the potential of becoming an invasive species. Common ants include: thatching ants, moisture ants, false honey ants, odorous house ants, Pharaoh ants, pavement ants, harvester ants, velvety tree ants, and carpenter ants. Several species of carpenter ants are presented with keys for identification. Exotic or tramp ant species that PMPs may encounter are presented: Argentine ants, ghost ants, red imported fire ants, little fire ants, European fire ants and rover ants. Participants appreciate having the actual ant in their collection to keep for review. Evaluations by participants indicate the information and guidance in the use of identification keys plus the availability of the take-home specimens have added to their professional development and has been as asset in working with clients.