

EVALUATION OF BAITS FOR CONTROL OF AFRICAN BIGHEADED ANT AND OTHER NUISANCE ANTS IN DARWIN, AUSTRALIA

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Abstract Darwin is the largest city in northern Australia, located above the tropic of Capricorn and experiences a tropical monsoon climate. A wide range of invasive and nuisance ants are present in and around Darwin and considered significant urban pests. These include African Bigheaded Ant (*Pheidole megacephala*), Singapore Ant (*Monomorium destructor*), and tropical fire ant (*Solenopsis geminata*), among others. A trial was commenced in October 2007, prior to the monsoon season, to evaluate the efficacy of a number of new granular ant baits for control of African bigheaded ant specifically. Whole suburban properties were treated with a single bait and each bait was replicated over several properties. The greatest impact of baiting was evident for *P. megacephala* with greater than 90% reduction in ants attending observation lures after 6 weeks. The effects of baiting on other species varied widely with some species reduced in numbers and others increasing, presumably due to the reduction in competition from *P. megacephala*.