

NORFOLK



ISLAND

THE GOVERNMENT OF NORFOLK ISLAND

MEDIA RELEASE

Norfolk Island Ant Survey

The Minister for the Environment, the Hon Stephanie Jack MLA, has announced that work began last week on the Norfolk Island Ant Survey. She said that the project was a joint initiative of the National Parks Service and the Administration of Norfolk Island, and aimed to identify the numbers and extent of native and foreign ant populations on the Island. The survey followed the positive identification of the Argentine Ant by Norfolk Island quarantine inspectors last year.

Mrs Jack said that the Argentine Ant, native to Argentina and Brazil, could be a serious household, horticultural and conservation pest. Natural dispersal of the ant was slow, but unintentional transport by humans facilitated rapid spread over much greater distances. While Argentine Ants can bite humans, they are not poisonous.

The Minister said that she had been informed that best way to tell Argentine Ants from other ants was by their trails, which were often five or more ants wide. Trails might travel up trees and buildings, which was uncommon in other ant species. The wingless worker ant (most commonly seen) was light to dark honey brown, and 2-3 mm long. The most common household ant on Norfolk Island was usually black.

Mrs Jack said that anyone who suspected the presence of Argentine Ants could contact the Land and Environment Office to ask for a collector to call and assist. This could be arranged by telephoning the Environment Officer, Nicole Diatloff, on 23595 or making a request by e-mail to ndiatloff@admin.gov.nf

Stephanie V Jack
Minister for the Environment

30th March 2006