

Quick Ant Guide



Over 50 species of ant can be found in Britain. Many of these are scarce or rarely encountered and are not covered by this guide.

NOTE: This guide only includes the most widespread and common species. Correct identification of nearly all species requires microscopic examination of features.

Field ID Guide to the workers of the most commonly encountered British ants

Start here

with an ant in a clear pot or tube and examine with a hand lens.
- use a twist of tissue to keep the ant at the end of the tube.

Petiole **Post-petiole**

Myrmicine ant

[www.Antweb.org/Flavia Esteves](http://www.Antweb.org/Flavia_Esteves)

'shoulders'

Tetramorium caespitum
(coasts & southern heaths)

0.5 mm

Very small, dark ant with square 'shoulders'.

Reddish, yellowish or bi-coloured ants, shoulders rounded.

Waist 1-segmented (petiole)

Waist 2-segmented (petiole and post-petiole)

Petiole **Antenna**

Funiculus

Formicine ant



Antenna with last 3 segments shorter than the rest of funiculus.

Antenna with last 3 segments as long as the rest of funiculus.

www.AntWeb.org

Myrmica species
(some very common)

0.5 mm

[www.Antweb.org/April Nobile](http://www.Antweb.org/April_Nobile)

Leptothorax acervorum (common)
or *Temnothorax* species.

0.2 mm

See over page

Formicine ant

Large; all workers in a nest greater than 4mm long, some greater than 7mm.

Small; most workers in a nest less than 4mm long.

Black ants without any red areas.

Ants with some red areas.

Yellow or yellow-brown ants.

Shining, glossy black ants. Head heart shaped.



Lasius flavus
(builds earth mounds in grassland)



Lasius fuliginosus

Clypeus NOT notched, head usually part black. Nest a thatched mound.

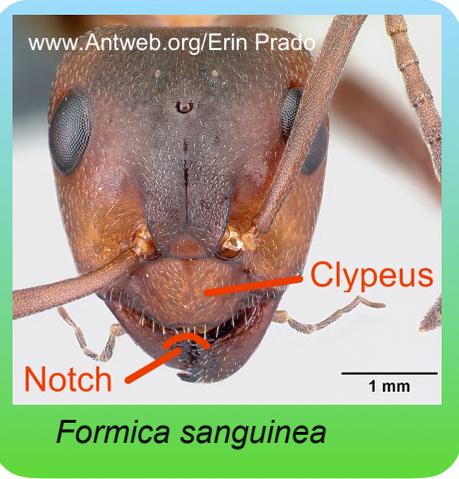
Clypeus notched, head usually all red.

Brown or dark-brown ants.

Ants matt black or silvery. Head not heart shaped.



The wood ants.
Formica aquilonia
Formica lugubris
Formica rufa



Formica sanguinea



Lasius niger
(common in gardens) or
Lasius alienus
Lasius platythorax



Formica fusca &
Formica lemani
(very common)

Key adapted from Skinner & Allen 1996
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