




PROPERTY FREEDOM OF PLANTS FOR RED IMPORTED FIRE ANT

VERSION REGISTER

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1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to describe -

- (a) the applicable standards and principles of operation; and
- (b) the responsibilities and practices of personnel;

that applies to certification of property freedom of plants for Red Imported Fire Ant (RIFA) under an Interstate Certification Assurance (ICA) arrangement.

2. SCOPE

This procedure covers all certification of property freedom of plants for Red Imported Fire Ant from a business operating under an ICA arrangement in Queensland.

This procedure covers property freedom of plants with media attached. Media includes soil, potting mixtures and other non-liquid mixtures of organic and inorganic material in which plants can grow.

This procedure is applicable where the requirements specified in section [6 Requirement](#) are a specified condition of entry of an Interstate Quarantine Authority for Red Imported Fire Ant.

Certification of property freedom of plants for Red Imported Fire Ant under this Operational Procedure may not be an accepted entry condition for all plants to all Intrastate and Interstate markets.

Some Intrastate or Interstate markets may require additional quarantine certification for pests and diseases other than Red Imported Fire Ant as a condition of entry.

It is the responsibility of the business consigning the plants to ensure compliance with all applicable quarantine requirements.

Information on Intrastate and Interstate quarantine requirements can be obtained from the ICA Co-ordinator for your district.

3. REFERENCES

WI-02

Guidelines for Completion of Plant Health Assurance Certificates

4. DEFINITIONS

Accredited Certifier

means the legal entity responsible for the operation of the ICA arrangement detailed on the Accredited Certifier's Application for Accreditation.

Application for Accreditation	means an <i>Application for Accreditation of a Business for an Interstate Certification Assurance (ICA) Arrangement</i> [CAF-47].
Approved Training Course	means an activity approved by DAF for the training and assessment of an Authorised Inspection Person.
Assurance Certificate	means a <i>Plant Health Assurance Certificate</i> [CAF-16].
Authorised Signatory	means a person whose name and specimen signature is included as an Authorised Signatory on the business's application for accreditation.
Authorised Inspection Person	means a person who has completed approved training in the detection and recognition of RIFA and who is authorised to conduct inspections on behalf of the business by having their name and signature on a register of authorised inspection persons maintained by the business.
business	means the accredited certifier (legal entity) responsible for the operation of the facility and ICA arrangement detailed in the accredited certifier's Application for Accreditation.
category	means a type of plant in a consignment that is likely to differ in its risk of being infested. Plants in a consignment may be segregated into categories on the basis of species, size of plants or pots and site of production.
Certification Assurance	means a voluntary arrangement between the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and a business that demonstrates effective in-house quality management and provides assurance through documented procedures and records that produce meets specified requirements.
certified/certification	means covered by a valid <i>Plant Health Assurance Certificate</i> [CAF-16].
Consignment	means a quantity of plants presented on one Plant Health Assurance Certificate. A consignment may contain a number of lots.
DAF	means Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
facility	means the location where the assembly, inspection, storage, certification and dispatch operations covered by the ICA arrangement are carried out.
ICA	means Interstate Certification Assurance.
Inspector	means an inspector appointed under the <i>Biosecurity Act 2014</i> .

Interstate Certification Assurance	means a system of Certification Assurance developed to meet the requirements of State and Territory governments for the certification of produce for interstate and intrastate quarantine purposes.
media	means any non-liquid combination of organic and/or inorganic material in which plants can grow including all soils and potting mixtures.
non-conformance	means a nonfulfillment of a specified requirement.
plant	means a living plant/cutting or other vegetative material in media in a growing unit.
property	means an area of land described in a property plan submitted with the business's Application for Accreditation [CAF-47].
Red Imported Fire Ant	means all stages of the ant species <i>Solenopsis invicta</i> Buren.
RIFA	means Red Imported Fire Ant.
source property	means any property owned or leased by the business on which plants are grown, stored, handled, inspected and packed for certification under this Operational Procedure.
suspect RIFA	means any ant that is between one (1) and six (6) millimetres in length and whose characteristics include a head and body that is a coppery-brown colour, with a darker abdomen; or any group of ants where ant size is polymorphic.
unit	means one plant in a growing unit or a number of small plants in a cell tray, also known as 'Seedlings'.

5. RESPONSIBILITY

These position titles have been used to reflect the responsibilities of staff under the ICA arrangement. These positions may not be present in all businesses, or different titles may be used for staff who carry out these responsibilities. In some businesses one person may carry out the responsibilities of more than one position.

The **Certification Controller** is responsible for -

- representing the business during audits and other matters relevant to ICA accreditation;
- training staff in their duties and responsibilities under this Operational Procedure;
- ensuring the business and its staff comply with their responsibilities and duties under this Operational Procedure;

PART A (covering property identification and property freedom inspection)

- ensuring the business has current accreditation for an ICA arrangement under Part A of this Operational Procedure ([refer 7.1](#));
- maintaining a property plan for each source property covered by the ICA arrangement ([refer 7.2](#));
- ensuring purchases of raw materials and other items brought onto a source property are free of RIFA ([refer 7.3](#));
- maintaining training records and a *Register of Authorised Inspection Persons* ([refer 7.4](#));
- maintaining RIFA inspection equipment ([refer 7.5](#));
- ensuring each source property covered under the scope of the ICA arrangement is inspected at least every twenty eight (28) days for the presence of RIFA ([refer 7.6.1](#));
- taking action following detection of RIFA on any source property ([refer 7.6.3](#));

PART B (covering plant receipt, consignment inspection, certification and dispatch)

- ensuring the business has current accreditation for an ICA arrangement under Part B of this Operational Procedure ([refer 7.1](#));
- ensuring plants received for certification which have been grown on another property during the 12 weeks prior to certification are covered by a valid *Area/Property Freedom Declaration for Red Imported Fire Ant* ([refer 7.8](#));
- ensuring each consignment of plants certified under the ICA arrangement is inspected for the presence of RIFA prior to certification ([refer 7.9](#));
- taking action following detection of suspect RIFA in a consignment of plants ([refer 7.9.3](#)).

Authorised Inspection Persons are responsible for -

- inspecting each source property covered by the ICA arrangement for the presence of suspect RIFA at least every 28 days prior to certification under this Operational Procedure ([refer 7.6.1](#));
- maintaining *Red Imported Fire Ant Property Freedom Inspection Records* ([refer 7.6.2](#));
- immediately advising the Certification Controller of any detection of suspected RIFA on a source property ([refer 7.6.3](#));
- inspecting all consignments of plants for the presence of RIFA prior to certification under this Operational Procedure ([refer 7.9](#));
- maintaining *Red Imported Fire Ant Freedom Consignment Inspection Records* ([refer 7.9.2](#));
- immediately advising the Certification Controller of any detection of suspected RIFA in a consignment inspected for certification under this Operational Procedure ([refer 7.9.3](#)).

The **Authorised Dispatcher** is responsible for -

- ensuring all packages covered by an Assurance Certificate issued by the business under this Operational Procedure are identified ([refer 7.11.1](#));
- maintaining copies of all Assurance Certificates issued by the business under the ICA arrangement ([refer 7.12](#)).

Authorised Signatories are responsible for -

- ensuring, prior to signing and issuing an Assurance Certificate, that plants covered by the certificate has been prepared in accordance with the business's ICA arrangement and that the details on the certificate are true and correct in every particular ([refer 7.10](#) and [7.11.2](#)).

6. REQUIREMENT

Plants certified for property freedom for Red Imported Fire Ant under this Operational Procedure must comply with the following requirement:

1. Grown and packed on a property free from Red Imported Fire Ants (RIFA).

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and Interstate Quarantine Authorities maintain the right to inspect certified produce at any time and to refuse to accept an Assurance Certificate where produce is found not to comply with specified requirements.

7. PROCEDURE

7.1 Accreditation

7.1.1 Application for Accreditation

A business seeking accreditation for an ICA arrangement under this Operational Procedure shall make application for accreditation ([refer Attachment 1 CAF-47](#)) at least 10 working days prior to the intended date of commencement of operation under the ICA arrangement.

If the business only inspects properties for freedom from RIFA for plants to be certified by another business, then Part A is to be indicated on the application and a property plan attached ([refer 7.2 Property Plan](#)).

If the business receives, certifies and dispatches plants grown on other business's properties, then Part B is to be indicated on the application.

If the business inspects properties for freedom from RIFA, and certifies and dispatches plants, then Part A and Part B are to be indicated on the application and a property plan attached.

7.1.2 Audit Process

Initial Audit

Prior to accrediting a business, an Initial Audit of the business is carried out to verify the ICA system is implemented and capable of operating in accordance with the requirements of the Operational Procedure, and the system is effective in ensuring compliance with the specified requirements of the ICA arrangement.

An ICA Auditor or Inspector shall inspect each source property for freedom from RIFA at the Initial Audit. The ICA Auditor shall also verify that all staff have been trained in their responsibilities and duties under the ICA arrangement.

An Inspector may inspect each source property for freedom from RIFA prior to the Initial Audit.

An Inspector conducting the property inspection of the source property shall provide a RIFA Property Freedom Inspection Report to the business. The Inspector Property Freedom Inspection Report must include –

- ***the name of the business that is responsible for the source property the subject of the property freedom inspection;***
- ***the street address of the property inspected;***
- ***the date of the property inspection;***
- ***the inspection result including the presence or absence of RIFA; and***
- ***the name and signature of the Inspector that carried out the property freedom inspection.***

In cases where a source property is inspected by an Inspector prior to the Initial Audit the business shall ensure that inspection of each source property is carried out no more than 28 days prior to the date of the Initial Audit.

The business shall provide the Inspection Report to the ICA Auditor at the Initial Audit.

On completion of a successful Initial Audit, applicants will be granted Annual Accreditation and posted a Certificate of Accreditation ([refer 7.1.3 Certificate of Accreditation](#)).

Compliance Audits

Compliance Audits are conducted to verify that the ICA system continues to operate in accordance with the requirements of the Operational Procedure.

Compliance Audits are, wherever practical, conducted when the ICA system is operating.

A Compliance Audit is conducted within four weeks of initial accreditation or 12 weeks of the annual renewal of accreditation of the ICA arrangement.

An ICA Auditor or Inspector will inspect each source property for freedom from RIFA at each compliance audit.

A compliance audit is conducted between six and nine months after the date of accreditation for an ICA arrangement that operates for more than six months of the year.

Random audits are conducted on a selected number of accredited businesses each year. Random audits may take the form of a full compliance audit, or audits of limited scope to inspection practices, certified produce, ICA system records or ICA system documentation.

Unscheduled compliance audits may be conducted at any time to investigate reported or suspected non-conformances.

Re-Accreditation

Accredited Certifiers are required to re-apply for accreditation each year the Accredited Certifier seeks to operate under the ICA arrangement. Accredited certifiers seeking re-accreditation must lodge a renewal application prior to accreditation lapsing, or if accreditation has lapsed, prior to commencing further certification of produce under the ICA arrangement.

A compliance audit is conducted within 12 weeks of the date of re-accreditation for a business applying for annual re-accreditation.

7.1.3 Certificate of Accreditation

An Accredited Certifier will receive a *Certificate of Accreditation for an Interstate Certification Assurance Arrangement* detailing the scope of the arrangement including –

- the facility location;
- the Operational Procedure;
- any restrictions on the accreditation such as the chemicals covered; and
- the period of accreditation.

The Accredited Certifier must maintain a current Certificate of Accreditation and make this available on request by an Inspector.

An Accredited Certifier may not commence or continue certification of produce under the ICA arrangement unless it is in possession of a valid and current Certificate of Accreditation for the facility, procedure, produce type and chemical covered by the Assurance Certificate.

PART A - (Covers property identification and property freedom inspection e.g. production nurseries)

7.2 Property Plan

The Certification Controller shall maintain a property plan for each source property.

A 'Source Property' may be a defined part of a larger parcel of land but must encompass all areas associated with the preparation, storage, maintenance or disposal of plants intended for certification under this procedure, or where any materials or equipment associated with any plants intended for certification under this procedure are stored.

The property plan shall comprise of a diagram of the layout of the source property including the following features –

- (a) road access including street names;
- (b) internal roadways within the property;
- (c) the location and identification of buildings on the property (e.g. office, house, equipment and potting sheds, and permanent shade house structures etc)
- (d) the size and location of all open and covered plant growing areas;
- (e) the real property description of each parcel of land that is part of the property; and
- (f) a statement that the property has been inspected by an Authorised Inspection Person and found free of Red Imported Fire Ant.

A copy of the Business's Property Plan(s) shall be included with the Business's Application for Accreditation ([refer 7.1.1 Application for Accreditation](#)).

A blank Property Plan is included as [Attachment 3](#) and may be copied for completion and inclusion with the business's Application for Accreditation.

7.3 Risk Management

The business shall implement risk management strategies to minimise the risk of source properties becoming infested with RIFA.

Risk management strategies shall include –

- (a) ensuring purchased materials or other items brought on to a source property, such as soil, media, plants, machinery and other equipment, are free of RIFA (i.e. purchasing raw materials from RIFA Free Suppliers or that are certified free from RIFA and carefully inspecting them prior to delivery); and

A business should source raw materials from suppliers that are located outside a RIFA restricted area or have RIFA property freedom accreditation which includes the raw materials to be supplied.

- (b) Regular inspection of the property to verify that the property is free from RIFA infestation ([refer 7.6 Property Freedom for Red Imported Fire Ants](#)).

The business shall maintain records of property inspections for RIFA ([refer 7.6.2 Property Freedom Inspection Records](#)) and of all purchases of raw materials as evidence of conformance with the above requirements.

7.4 Authorised Inspection Persons

One or more Authorised Inspection Persons shall be trained in the detection and recognition of RIFA. Authorised Inspection Persons shall have successfully completed an approved training course in the detection and recognition of RIFA.

Accredited businesses shall maintain training records to demonstrate that each Authorised Inspection Person has successfully completed an approved training course.

The name, date of training and specimen signature for each Authorised Inspection Person shall be included on a *Register of Authorised Inspection Persons* maintained by the business ([refer Attachment 4](#)). Only persons currently on the register shall carry out RIFA inspections.

7.5 Inspection Equipment

The business shall maintain the following inspection equipment –

- (a) a hand lens, microscope or other device that provides X10 or greater magnification;
- (b) reference illustrations and photographs for identification of RIFA;
- (c) specimen bottles, methylated spirits and equipment for collecting ant specimens.

7.6 Property Freedom Inspection for Red Imported Fire Ant

Businesses accredited under Part A of this Operational Procedure shall ensure an Authorised Inspection Person conducts regular inspections of all source properties covered by the ICA arrangement to ensure they remain free of RIFA infestation.

7.6.1 Property Freedom Inspection Procedure

Frequency of Inspection

An Authorised Inspection Person shall inspect each source property covered by the ICA arrangement for the presence of suspect RIFA –

- (a) prior to the business's initial application for accreditation under this Operational Procedure ([refer 7.1.1 Application for Accreditation](#)); and
- (b) at intervals of not greater than every twenty eight (28) days thereafter.

Inspection Methodology

Property freedom inspections shall only be undertaken by Authorised Inspection Persons. The name(s) of each Authorised Inspection Person shall be recorded in the business's *Register of Authorised Inspection Persons* ([refer 7.4 Authorised Inspection Persons](#)).

Property Freedom Inspections shall comprise an inspection of all production and non-production areas within the source property boundaries and include any ornamental gardens or lawn areas, water storage area i.e. dams or ponds or watercourses any recently introduced plants or equipment and the boundaries of the property. The whole source property shall be inspected on the same day.

Inspection shall include an examination of likely RIFA nest sites including around or under any equipment, machinery, raw materials or other items stored in contact with the ground, and in potted plants.

Any ants found during RIFA property inspections that are suspected to be RIFA shall be collected and submitted to the Biosecurity Queensland Control Centre (BQCC) for identification (attachment 7).

Information on the recognition and life cycle of RIFA is given in [Attachment 12 – Identification of Red Imported Fire Ant](#).

7.6.2 Property Freedom Inspection Records

The Certification Controller shall maintain records of the results of all RIFA property freedom inspections.

Inspection records shall be in the form of a *Red Imported Fire Ant Property Freedom Inspection Record* ([refer Attachment 5](#)) or records which capture the same information.

Property Freedom Inspection Records must include –

- the name and Interstate Produce (IP) Number of the business that is accredited under Part A of this Operational Procedure and is responsible for the source property the subject of the property freedom inspection;
- the street address of the property inspected;
- the date of the property inspection;
- the inspection result including the presence or absence of suspected RIFA; and
- the name and signature of the Authorised Inspection Person(s) that carried out the property freedom inspection.

An example of a completed *Red Imported Fire Ant Property Freedom Inspection Record* is shown as [Attachment 6](#).

7.6.3 Action Following Detection of Red Imported Fire Ant

The Authorised Inspection Person(s) detecting suspect RIFA shall immediately advise the Certification Controller of the detection of suspect RIFA on any source property covered by the ICA arrangement, whether during a property freedom inspection or at any other time.

Following detection of suspected RIFA on a source property, the Certification Controller shall take the following actions –

- (a) immediately **cease certification** under the ICA arrangement of any plants grown on the source property, including any plants which have been prepared for certification but which remain on the property; and
- (b) as soon as practical and not more than 24 hours from the time of the detection, the detection shall be **reported to the ICA Co-ordinator** for the district in which the ICA arrangement operates.

Samples of suspected RIFA shall be collected by an Authorised Inspection Person and placed in a specimen bottle filled with methylated spirits. Samples shall be labelled with the date of inspection, the Interstate Produce Number (IP No.) of the accredited business and the address of the property or the facility number.

Immediately following the collection of a suspect RIFA sample the Certification Controller shall contact the Biosecurity Queensland Control Centre (BQCC) by telephoning 13 25 23. If requested, the Certification Controller shall forward the suspect RIFA sample with a completed *Ant Sample Submitted for Identification* [CAF-07] form ([refer Attachment 7](#)) to the BQCC for identification.

If the presence of RIFA is confirmed, the business shall immediately **cease all certification of plants** under the ICA arrangement.

Certification under this Operational Procedure may not recommence until the ICA Co-ordinator for the district confirms in writing that the infestation on the source property has been eradicated and that the business may recommence certification from the source property under the ICA arrangement ([refer 7.7 Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication](#)).

If the ICA Co-ordinator confirms that the suspected infestation is not RIFA, the business may recommence certification of plants grown on the source property under this Operational Procedure.

Plants grown on properties that have lost their property free status for RIFA may be certified under an alternative quarantine entry requirement such as the ICA Operational Procedure 'Inspection and Treatment of Plants for Red Imported Fire Ant' [ICA-39].

7.7 Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication

An accredited business must should not attempt the eradication of RIFA on a source property on which RIFA infestation has been confirmed.



The eradication of RIFA on a source property should be undertaken by a relevant Government Authority.

Reinstatement of property freedom must be confirmed in writing by the ICA Co-ordinator for the district prior to the business recommencing certification of plants grown on the property under this Operational Procedure.

PART B - (Covers the activities of plant receipt, consignment inspection, certification and dispatch e.g. nurseries consigning to interstate markets)

7.8 Property Freedom for Red Imported Fire Ant for Plants Sourced From Another Property

An accredited business that wishes to certify and dispatch plants under this Operational Procedure where the plants have been grown on another property within the last 12 weeks must ensure:-

- (a) the plants are supplied by a business accredited under Part A of this Operational Procedure; or
- (b) the plants are supplied by a business accredited under a RIFA Property Freedom [RPF-01] accreditation arrangement; or
- (c) the plants are supplied by a business which is outside a RIFA property freedom area that is accredited for RIFA Area Freedom [RAF-01]; and
- (d) each delivery of plants supplied by the other business for certification is accompanied by:
 - a valid *Area/Property Freedom Declaration for Red Imported Fire Ant*; or
 - a valid Plant Health Assurance Certificate issued by a business accredited for RIFA Property Freedom or RIFA Area Freedom; and
- (e) the identification of the plants and their supporting declaration details are maintained from receipt through to certification and dispatch.

The accredited business that initially grew the plants shall provide the certifying business with a valid *Area/Property Freedom Declaration for Red Imported Fire Ant* (refer [Attachment 8](#) and [Attachment 9](#)) with each lot of plants delivered to the certifying business.

An Area/Property Freedom Declaration is not required where plants grown for 12 weeks prior to certification are covered under the scope of the ICA arrangement of the certifying business.

The declaration must include –

- (a) the name and Interstate Produce (IP) number of the accredited business that grew these plants;
- (b) the identification of the source property on which the plants were grown;
- (c) the number of weeks the plants were grown on the property (up to a maximum of 12 weeks) prior to issuance of the declaration;
- (d) that the property has been inspected in accordance with this Operational Procedure and found free of RIFA;
- (e) the number and description of plants in the consignment;

- (f) the name, signature and date of the Authorised Signatory issuing the declaration.

7.9 Consignment Inspection for Red Imported Fire Ant

All consignments of plants certified for property freedom for RIFA under this Operational Procedure shall be inspected for RIFA prior to certification.

Businesses inspecting and certifying consignments of plants under this Operational Procedure shall have a designated area for conducting consignment inspections.

7.9.1 Consignment Inspection Procedure

Frequency of Inspection

Consignments of plants shall be inspected as close as practicable and not more than 48 hours prior to, the time of dispatch from the facility.

Inspection Methodology

Every unit in the consignment shall be inspected by an Authorised Inspection Person prior to certification for freedom from RIFA.

Inspections shall include examination of the above ground portions of the plants and their containers/media for ant activity. The surface of the media shall be inspected by an Authorised Inspection Person during detailing and preparation if the consignment is dispatched within 48 hours of this inspection.

Ants found during inspections that are suspected to be RIFA shall be collected and forwarded, as required, to the BQCC for identification within one working day of detection.

Information on the life cycle and identification of RIFA is given in [Attachment 12 – Identification of Red Imported Fire Ant](#).

7.9.2 Consignment Inspection Records

The Authorised Inspection Person shall maintain records of the results of all consignment inspections for RIFA.

Inspection records shall be in the form of a *Consignment Inspection Record for Red Imported Fire Ant* ([refer Attachment 10](#)) or records which capture the same information.

Inspection records must include –

- the Interstate Produce (IP) Number of the business that operates the approved facility in which the inspection was undertaken;
- the number of the Assurance Certificate to which the inspection relates;
- the date of inspection;
- each plant type inspected including the name of the plant, a description of the growing unit or other container, and the number of plants inspected;
- the inspection result including the presence or absence of RIFA;
- details including the number of rejected plants following detection of suspected RIFA;
- details of any treatments and re-inspections of rejected plants;
- the name and signature of the Authorised Inspection Person.

An example of a completed *Consignment Inspection Record for Red Imported Fire Ant* is shown as [Attachment 11](#).

7.9.3 Action Following Detection of Red Imported Fire Ant

The Authorised Inspection Person(s) detecting suspect RIFA shall immediately advise the Certification Controller for the business of any detection of suspected RIFA identified during plant inspections or at any other time.

Following a detection of suspected RIFA, the Certification Controller shall take the following actions –

- (a) immediately **cease certification** under the ICA arrangement of any plants grown on the source property including any plants which have been prepared for certification but which remain on the property;
- (b) as soon as practical and not more than one business day from the time of the detection, the detection shall be **reported to the ICA Co-ordinator** for the district in which the ICA arrangement operates.

Samples of suspect RIFA shall be collected by an Authorised Inspection Person and placed in a specimen bottle filled with methylated spirits for identification. Samples shall be labelled with the date of inspection, the Interstate Produce Number (IP No.) of the accredited business and the address of the property or the facility number.

Immediately following the collection of a suspect RIFA sample the Certification Controller shall contact the BQCC by telephoning 13 25 23. If requested, the Certification Controller shall forward the suspect RIFA sample with a completed *Ant Sample Submitted for Identification* [CAF-07] form ([refer Attachment 7](#)) to the BQCC for identification.

If the presence of RIFA is confirmed, the business will **cease all certification of plants** under the ICA arrangement.

Certification under this Operational Procedure may not recommence until the ICA Co-ordinator for the district confirms in writing that the infestation on the source property has been eradicated and that the business may recommence certification from the source property under the ICA arrangement (refer [7.7 Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication](#)).

If the ICA Co-ordinator confirms that the suspected infestation is not RIFA, the business may recommence certification of plants grown on the source property under this Operational Procedure.

Plants grown on properties that have lost their property free status for RIFA may be certified under an alternative quarantine entry requirement such as the ICA Operational Procedure 'Inspection and Treatment of Plants for Red Imported Fire Ant' [ICA-39].

7.10 Certification of Red Imported Fire Ants Property Freedom

Prior to certifying plants for RIFA Property Freedom, the Authorised Signatory signing the certificate shall verify that all plants in the consignment comply with the requirements specified in [6. Requirement](#) (refer [7.11.2 Assurance Certificates](#)).

Where plants are grown on another property during the 12 weeks prior to certification, verification shall include sighting a:

- (a) valid *Area/Property Freedom Declaration for Red Imported Fire Ant* covering the source properties on which the plants were grown during the previous 12 weeks ([refer 7.8 Property Freedom for Red Imported Fire Ant for Plants Sourced From Another Property](#)); or
- (b) valid Plant Health Assurance Certificate issued by a business accredited for RIFA Area Freedom [RAF-01] or RIFA Property Freedom [RPF-01].

7.11 Dispatch

7.11.1 Package Identification

The Authorised Dispatcher shall ensure that, after packing, each package is marked in indelible and legible characters of at least 5mm, with -

- the Interstate Produce Number of the business that operates the approved facility from which the plants were certified;
- the words "MEETS ICA-40"; and
- the date (or date code) on which the plants were packed or prepared for certification;

prior to the issuance of an Assurance Certificate by the business under this Operational Procedure.

If plants are consigned loose in pots and not in packages, identification shall conform to one of the following requirements depending on the specified requirements of the importing State or Territory –

- the above information is written on the consignment note or the invoice accompanying the plants and signed and dated by an Authorised Signatory of the business certifying the plants; or
- each plant has a tag or label securely attached to it that includes the above information; or
- the plants are sealed in an enclosed vehicle or container and the seal number is included on the Assurance Certificate accompanying the consignment.

Plants grown on a property that has not been inspected in accordance with the requirements of this Operational Procedure shall not be marked as stated above.

7.11.2 Assurance Certificates

The Authorised Dispatcher shall ensure an Assurance Certificate is completed and signed by an Authorised Signatory of the business prior to consignment of plants to a market requiring certification of property freedom for RIFA.

Assurance Certificates shall be in the form of a *Plant Health Assurance Certificate* [CAF-16].

Assurance Certificates shall include –

- (a) in the ‘Accredited Business that Prepared the Produce’ section -
 - the name and address of the accredited business **certifying the plants**;
- (b) in the ‘IP No. of Acc. Business’ section -
 - the IP No. of the accredited business **certifying the plants**;
- (c) in the ‘Type of Produce’ section -
 - the **number and description** of plants in the consignment;

NOTE: Where there is insufficient room to list each plant type, the words ‘See Attachment’ are to be written and an Attachment Sheet securely attached to each copy of the Assurance Certificate.

The Attachment Sheet must include the words “ATTACHMENT SHEET”, the name and address of the consignor, the Assurance Certificate number, the signature of the Authorised Signatory that signed the certificate and the date.

An example Attachment Sheet is included with [Attachment 2](#).

- (d) the following statement -

‘Grown and packed on a property free from red imported fire ant.’

The statement may either be written in the 'Additional Certification' section or as a pre-completed endorsement validated with the date the certificate was issued a 'tick'.

A completed example is shown as [Attachment 2](#).

Individual Assurance Certificates shall be issued to cover each consignment to avoid splitting of consignments.

Assurance Certificates shall be completed, issued and distributed in accordance with the Work Instruction *Guidelines for Completion of Plant Health Assurance Certificates* [WI-02].

7.11.3 Assurance Certificate Distribution

The **original** (yellow copy) must accompany the consignment.

The **duplicate** (white copy) must be retained by the business.

7.12 ICA System Records

The business shall maintain the following records-

PART A

- (a) **Property Plan** for each source property ([refer 7.2](#));
- (b) Purchasing records for all host material ([refer 7.3](#));
- (c) **Register of Authorised Inspection Persons** ([refer 7.4](#));
- (d) Training records for each Authorised Inspection Person trained ([refer 7.4](#));
- (e) **Red Imported Fire Ant Property Freedom Inspection Record** ([refer 7.6.2](#));

PART B

- (f) **Register of Authorised Inspection Persons** ([refer 7.4](#));
- (g) Training records for each Authorised Inspection Person trained ([refer 7.4](#));
- (h) copies of each **Area/Property Freedom Declaration for Red Imported Fire Ant** received by the business ([refer 7.8](#));
- (i) **Consignment Inspection Record for Red Imported Fire Ant** ([refer 7.9.2](#));
- (j) the duplicate copy of each **Plant Health Assurance Certificate** [CAF 16] issued by the business ([refer 7.12](#)).

A business accredited for Parts A and B of this Operational Procedure shall only be required to maintain one set of training records for each Authorised Inspection Person and *Register of Authorised Inspection Persons*.

ICA system records shall be retained for a period of not less than 12 months from completion or until the next Compliance Audit of the business, whichever is the later.

An Accredited Business must hold a minimum of 12 months ICA System Records at the time of any Compliance Audit. If the Compliance Audit is conducted more than 12 months from the last Compliance Audit, the business must maintain all records completed since the previous Compliance Audit.

ICA System Records shall be made available on request by an Inspector.

7.13 ICA System Documentation

The business shall maintain the following documentation-

- (a) a copy of the business's current **Application for Accreditation** ([refer Attachment 1](#));
- (b) a current copy of this Operational Procedure;
- (c) a current **Certificate of Accreditation for an Interstate Certification Assurance Arrangement**.

ICA system documentation shall be made available on request by an Inspector.

8. ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1	<i>Application for Accreditation of an Accredited Certifier for an Interstate Certification Assurance (ICA) Arrangement</i>	CAF-47 (FRONT PAGE ONLY)
Attachment 2	<i>Plant Health Assurance Certificate</i>	CAF-16 (COMPLETED EXAMPLE)
Attachment 3	<i>Property Plan (RIFA)</i>	CAF-88 (BLANK)
Attachment 4	<i>Register of Authorised Inspection Persons</i>	CAF-89 (BLANK)
Attachment 5	<i>Red Imported Fire Ant Property Freedom Inspection Record</i>	CAF-90 (BLANK)
Attachment 6	<i>Red Imported Fire Ant Property Freedom Inspection Record</i>	CAF-90 (COMPLETED EXAMPLE)
Attachment 7	<i>Ant Sample Submitted for Identification</i>	CAF-07 (BLANK)



Attachment 8	<i>Area/Property Freedom Declaration for Red Imported Fire Ant</i>	CAF-91 (BLANK)
Attachment 9	<i>Area/Property Freedom Declaration for Red Imported Fire Ant</i>	CAF-91 (COMPLETED EXAMPLE)
Attachment 10	<i>Consignment Inspection Record for Red Imported Fire Ant</i>	CAF-92 (BLANK)
Attachment 11	<i>Consignment Inspection Record for Red Imported Fire Ant</i>	CAF-92 (COMPLETED EXAMPLE)
Attachment 12	Identification of Red Imported Fire Ant	



Application for accreditation of an accredited certifier for an Interstate Certification Assurance (ICA) arrangement

Pursuant to section 420 of the *Biosecurity Act 2014*

OFFICE USE ONLY

DATE RECEIVED:
PHIS NUMBER:
DATE APPROVED OR REFUSED:
FURTHER INFORMATION REQUEST DATE:
DATE FURTHER INFORMATION RECEIVED:
PAYMENT PROCESSED DATE:
PAYMENT AMOUNT RECEIVED:
RECEIPT NUMBER:

Important information for applicants

This form is to be used to apply as an accredited certifier for an Interstate Certification Assurance (ICA) arrangement.

Information requested will enable your application to be processed as prescribed by the *Biosecurity Act 2014*. Your application must be assessed and granted by the chief executive before you can proceed with the proposed activity.

Before lodging this application you should be familiar with the requirements of the *Biosecurity Act 2014* available on the Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel website <http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au>.

How to complete form for a new application

- Must complete entire form.

How to complete form for an amendment or renewal

- Update any areas that require amendments;
- Must complete part A section 1, part B sections 2-4 and part C.

How to submit this form

- In person to:
Any [Department of Agriculture and Fisheries regional office](#); or
- Via post to:
Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
PO Box 5083
Nambour Qld 4560

Prescribed fee

- Fees are applicable until 30 June 2017.
- Payment of prescribed fee must be paid at the application submission for it to be processed.

Term of accreditation

The term of this accreditation shall be one (1) year unless sooner cancelled or suspended from the date of your application being approved.

Notification

The applicant will be notified of the outcome within thirty (30) days of receipt of the application. The applicant will be notified by post to the applicant's postal address.

The application is deemed to have been received when the [District Co-ordinator \(Certification and Accreditation Services\)](#) in your district is in receipt of an accurate and complete application and payment of the prescribed fee has been received, processed and cleared.

Contact us

For more information please contact the District Co-ordinator (Certification and Accreditation Services), Plant Biosecurity & Product Integrity, Biosecurity Queensland, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries in your district or the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries Customer Service Centre on 13 25 23.



**Queensland
Government**

Plant Health Assurance Certificate

Pursuant to Sections 412 and 413 of the Biosecurity Act 2014
(Means a biosecurity certificate issued in accordance with Chapter 15 of the Biosecurity Act 2014.)

Consignment Details (Please print)

Certificate Number 9999999

Consignor

Consignee

Name Tropical Plant Nursery
Address Nursery Road Wacol Qld 4076

Name Plant Wholesalers Pty Ltd
Address 14-16 Long Street Footscray Vic 3011

Reconsigned To (Splitting consignments or reconsigning whole consignments)

Method of Transport (Provide details where known)

Name
Address

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Road	Truck/Trailer Registration
<input type="checkbox"/> Rail	Consignment
<input type="checkbox"/> Air	Airline/Flight no.
<input type="checkbox"/> Sea	Vessel Name & Voyage no.

Certification Details (Please print)

Accredited Certifier that Prepared the Produce

Grower or Packer

Name Tropical Plant Nursery
Address Nursery Road Wacol Qld 4076

Name Tropical Plant Nursery
Address Nursery Road Wacol Qld 4076

IP No. of Acc. Certifier

Brand Name or Identifying Marks (as marked on packages)

Date Code (as marked on packages)

Q 9999

Tropical Plant Nursery

8/11/2016

Facility No.	Procedure Code	Expiry Date
01	ICA-40	01/01/17

Facility No.	Procedure Code	Expiry Date
		/ /

Number of Packages	Type of Packages (e.g. trays, cartons)	Type of Produce	Authorisation for Split Consignment
3	Cartons	Mixed Plants	
		'see attachment'	

Date	Treatment	Chemical (Active Ingredient)	Concentration	Duration and Temperature
/ /	<input type="checkbox"/> Dipping	Dimethoate	400ppm	<input type="checkbox"/> One min. <input type="checkbox"/> 10 sec. then wet for 60 sec.
/ /	<input type="checkbox"/> Flood Spraying	Dimethoate	400ppm	10 seconds then wet for 60 seconds
/ /	<input type="checkbox"/> Fumigation	Methyl Bromide	g/m ³	Two hours @ °C
8/11/16	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grown and packed on a property free from red imported fire ant			
/ /	<input type="checkbox"/> Sourced from a property located more than 5km from a known infestation of red imported fire ant			
/ /	<input type="checkbox"/> Mature green condition at packing			
/ /	<input type="checkbox"/> Bananas in a hard green condition with unbroken skin			
/ /	<input type="checkbox"/> Inspected and found free of melon thrips			

Additional Certification

--

Declaration

I, an Authorised Signatory of the accredited certifier that prepared the plants or plant produce described above, hereby declare that the plants or plant produce have been prepared in the accredited certifier's approved facilities in accordance with the accreditation(s) granted to the accredited certifier under the Biosecurity Act 2014 and that the details shown above are true and correct in every particular.

Authorised Signatory's Name (Please print)

Signature

Date

Arthur John Signatory

A J Signatory

8/11/16

Yellow copy: Consignment copy (original) **White copy:** Accredited Certifier's copy (duplicate copy)

CAF-16 (08/16) V3

ATTACHMENT SHEET

Plant Health Assurance Certificate No. 9999999

Consignor –

Tropics Plant Nursery Pty Ltd
Nursery Road
Wacol QLD 4076

Carton No.	No. and Size of Plants	Type of Plants
1	10 X 150 mm 20 X 150 mm	Small Leaf Lillypilly (<i>Syzygium luehmannii</i>) Lemon Scented Myrtle (<i>Backhousia citriodora</i>)
2	10 X 75 mm 10 X 75 mm 10 X 75 mm	Dwarf Agapanthus (White) (<i>Agapanthus sp.</i>) Native Violet (<i>Viola hederacea</i>) Bangalow Palm (<i>Archontophoenix cunninghamiana</i>)
3	20 X tubes 20 X tubes 40 X tubes	Walking Stick Palm (<i>Linospadix monostachya</i>) Foxtail Palm (<i>Wodyetia bifurcata</i>) Bangalow Palm (<i>Archontophoenix cunninghamiana</i>)

Authorised Signatory -

Arthur John Signatory

Printed Name

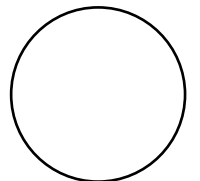
A J Signatory

Signature

8/11/16

Date

PROPERTY PLAN



INDICATE NORTH

ARRANGEMENT DETAILS

Applicant's Name *(as shown on the application form)*

SCOPE OF ARRANGEMENT

Street Address of Property

Postcode

Real Property Description(s) *(available from Rates Notice)*

PROPERTY PLAN DETAILS

The property plan (overleaf) is to include the following-

1. road access including street names;
2. internal roadways within the property;
3. the location and identification of buildings on the property (e.g. office, house, equipment and potting sheds, and permanent shade house structures etc);
4. the size and location of all open and covered plant growing areas.

DECLARATION

I *(full printed name)* the
..... *(position in business)*
am authorised to sign on behalf of the business and I understand that-

1. I understand that-
 - (a) accreditation will only be granted for properties covered by a Property Plan submitted with the *Application for Accreditation of an Accredited Certifier for an Interstate Certification Assurance (ICA) Arrangement [CAF-47]*;
 - (b) application must be made to amend any of the current details in the *Application for Accreditation of an Accredited Certifier for an Interstate Certification Assurance (ICA) Arrangement [CAF-47]* or this Property Plan; and
 - (c) following accreditation, certification can only be issued in accordance with scope of accreditation detailed in the *Certificate of Accreditation for an Interstate Certification Assurance (ICA) Arrangement* covering the arrangement.
2. The property covered by this Property Plan has been inspected by an Authorised Inspection Person on / / and found free of Red Imported Fire Ant.

.....
Signature

/ /
Date

REGISTER OF AUTHORISED INSPECTION PERSONS

Business Name				IP Number	Q		
Date/s of Training	Authorised Inspection Person		Authorisation by Certification Controller				
	Printed Name	Signature	Printed Name	Signature			

Note: Place a line through any entry for any person who is no longer authorised to carry out RIFA freedom inspections under the business’s Interstate Certification Assurance arrangement.

RED IMPORTED FIRE ANT PROPERTY FREEDOM INSPECTION RECORD

Business Name:				IP Number: Q		
Street Address of Property:						
Date of Inspection	Areas Inspected	Free of RIFA?		Comments	Authorized Inspection Person	
		Yes	No		Printed Name	Signature

RED IMPORTED FIRE ANT PROPERTY FREEDOM INSPECTION RECORD

Business Name: <i>Tropics Plant Nursery Pty Ltd</i>				IP Number: Q 9 9 9 9			
Street Address of Property: <i>Nursery Road, Wacol QLD 4076</i>							
Date of Inspection	Areas Inspected	Free of RIFA?		Comments	Authorised Inspection Person		
		Yes	No		Printed Name	Signature	
11/4/16	<i>All areas of the property</i>		✓		<i>Arthur Signatory</i>	<i>AJ Signatory</i>	
10/5/16	<i>Growing-on shade house and potting and propagating areas.</i>		✓		<i>Arthur Signatory</i>	<i>AJ Signatory</i>	
10/5/16	<i>All open growing areas & property boundary</i>		✓		<i>Ann Inspector</i>	<i>A Inspector</i>	
4/6/16	<i>All areas of the property</i>		✓		<i>Ann Inspector</i>	<i>A Inspector</i>	
2/7/16	<i>All areas of the property</i>		✓		<i>Arthur Signatory</i>	<i>AJ Signatory</i>	
30/7/16	<i>All areas of the property</i>		✓		<i>Ann Inspector</i>	<i>A Inspector</i>	
24/8/16	<i>All areas of the property</i>	✓		<i>Found suspected RIFA nest</i>	<i>Ann Inspector</i>	<i>A Inspector</i>	
				<i>NE boundary.</i>			
				<i>Reported detection to Cert.</i>			
				<i>Controller at 15:30.</i>			
				<i>ICA Co-ordinator advised at 16:00</i>			
				<i>24/08/16. Samples forwarded to BQCC for ID 25/08/16. Cert Controller</i>			
				<i>26/08/16 - Samples confirmed as RIFA by BQCC. Arrangement suspended by</i>			
				<i>DAF 26/08/16. Cert. Controller</i>			



ANT SAMPLE SUBMITTED FOR IDENTIFICATION

This form should accompany each sample of ants submitted to the Biosecurity Queensland Control Centre for identification.

Please forward the sample with the completed form to -

Diagnostic Unit, Biosecurity Queensland Control Centre, 55 Priors Pocket Road, Moggill Qld 4070 or mail PO BOX 204 Bellbowrie Qld 4070

Name of business submitting sample:

IP Number:

Q

Postal address for response:

Telephone number:

Facsimile number:

Mobile number:

()

()

Name of person who collected sample:

Time and date collected:

: AM / /
PM

Street address of property where ants collected:

Type of inspection:

- Property
 Consignment
 Equipment
 Routine Monitoring
 Other (specify)

.....
.....
.....
.....

Brief description of where ants were found:

.....
.....
.....
.....

Printed Name

Signature

Date

/ /

OFFICE USE ONLY

Sample number:

Time and date received:

: AM / /
PM

Ant species identified:

- Red Imported Fire Ant (*Solenopsis invicta*)
 Tropical Fire Ant (*Solenopsis geminata*)
 Other (specify) -

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Identified by:

Printed Name

Signature

Date

/ /

Business advised by:

- Post
 Facsimile

Time and date sent:

: AM / /
PM

Printed Name

Signature

Date

/ /

AREA/PROPERTY FREEDOM DECLARATION FOR RED IMPORTED FIRE ANT

An Area/Property Freedom Declaration for Red Imported Fire Ant must be provided to the certifying business with each consignment of plants delivered for certification under the ICA Operational Procedure 'Property Freedom of Plants for Red Imported Fire Ant' [ICA-40].

Consignor Details:

Accredited Business Name:

IP Number:

	Q				
--	---	--	--	--	--

Street Address of Property:

--

Consignee Details:

Accredited Business Name:

IP Number:

	Q				
--	---	--	--	--	--

Facility (Delivery) Address:

--

Consignment Details:

The plants described below comply with the following requirement (tick ✓ as applicable) -

- Grown on a property covered under the scope of the consigning business's ICA arrangement for the ICA Operational Procedure *Property Freedom for Red Imported Fire Ant* [ICA-40] for –
 - a minimum of 12 weeks;
 - _____ weeks;
 - for the life of the plants (for plants less than 12 weeks old);

on a property inspected at least every 28 days by the business and found free of Red Imported Fire Ant.

- Grown on a property covered under the scope of the consigning business's property freedom accreditation for Red Imported Fire Ant, (i.e. grown on a property inspected every 28 days by an inspector and found free of Red Imported Fire Ant).

- Grown on a property covered under the scope of the consigning business's area freedom accreditation for Red Imported Fire Ant, (ie grown more than 5 km from a known infestation of Red Imported Fire Ant).

Number and Type of Packages	Number of Plants and Container Size/Type	Description of Plants

Declaration:

I am an Authorised Signatory of the Consigning Business and the information given above is, to the best of my knowledge, true and correct in every particular.

Printed Name

Signature

Date

--

--

/ /

AREA/PROPERTY FREEDOM DECLARATION FOR RED IMPORTED FIRE ANT

An Area/Property Freedom Declaration for Red Imported Fire Ant must be provided to the certifying business with each consignment of plants delivered for certification under the ICA Operational Procedure 'Property Freedom of Plants for Red Imported Fire Ant' [ICA-40].

Consignor Details:

Accredited Business Name:

IP Number:

Joe's Plant Supplies Pty. Ltd.

Q 9 0 0 0

Street Address of Property Where Plants Were Grown:

Lots 14-18, School Road, Durack QLD 4077

Consignee Details:

Accredited Business Name:

IP Number:

Tropics Plant Nursery P/L

Q 9 9 9 9

Facility (Delivery) Address:

Nursery Road, Wacol QLD 4076

Consignment Details:

The plants described below comply with the following requirement (tick ✓ as applicable) -

- Grown on a property covered under the scope of the consigning business's ICA arrangement for the ICA Operational Procedure *Property Freedom for Red Imported Fire Ant* [ICA-40] for –
- a minimum of 12 weeks;
 - _____ weeks;
 - for the life of the plants (for plants less than 12 weeks old);
- on a property inspected at least every 4 weeks by the business and found free of Red Imported Fire Ant.
- Grown on a property covered under the scope of the consigning business's property freedom accreditation for Red Imported Fire Ant, (i.e. grown on a property inspected every 28 days by an inspector and found free of Red Imported Fire Ant).
- Grown on a property covered under the scope of the consigning business's area freedom accreditation for Red Imported Fire Ant, (i.e. grown more than 5 km from a known infestation of Red Imported Fire Ant).

Number and Type of Packages	Number of Plants and Container Size/Type	Description of Plants
<i>2 cartons</i>	<i>40 X 6" pots</i>	<i>SLeaf Lillypilly (Syzygium leuhmannii)</i>
<i>10 trays</i>	<i>300 X tubes</i>	<i>Lipstick Palm (Cyrtostachys renda)</i>
<i>1 carton</i>	<i>42 X plants</i>	<i>Orchid plants (Dendrobium hybrids)</i>
<i>1 pallet</i>	<i>100 X 75 mm pots</i>	<i>Agapanthus - White (Agapanthus sp.)</i>

Declaration:

I am an Authorised Signatory of the Consignor Business and the information given above is, to the best of my knowledge, true and correct in every particular.

Printed Name

John Signatory

Signature

J Signatory

Date

20 / 7 / 16

CONSIGNMENT INSPECTION RECORD FOR RED IMPORTED FIRE ANT

Business Name			IP Number Q			PHA Certificate No.	
Date	Plant Category			Free of RIFA?		Authorised Inspection Person	
	Type of Plants	No. of Plants	Size of Plants	Yes	No	Printed Name	Signature

The consignment described above has been inspected in accordance with the requirements of the ICA Operational Procedure *Property Freedom for of Plants Red Imported Fire Ant* [ICA-40].

Authorised Signatory

/ /

CONSIGNMENT INSPECTION RECORD FOR RED IMPORTED FIRE ANT

Business Name		<i>Tropics Plant Nursery P/L</i>				IP Number				Q	9	9	9	9	PHA Certificate No.		9999999	
Date	Plant Category			Free of RIFA?		Comments	Authorised Inspection Person											
	Type of Plants	No. of Plants	Size of Plants	Yes	No		Printed Name	Signature										
28/07/1	<i>S Leaf Lillypilly</i>	10	6" pots	✓														
"	<i>Lemon Scented</i>	20	6" pots	✓														
"	<i>Agapanthus</i>	10	3" pots	✓			<i>John Inspector</i>	<i>J Inspector</i>										
"	<i>Native Violet</i>	10	3" pots	✓														
"	<i>Bangalow Palms</i>	10	3" pots	✓														
29/07/1	<i>Walking Stick</i>	20	tubes	✓			<i>Ann Inspector</i>	<i>A Inspector</i>										
"	<i>Foxtail Palm</i>	20	tubes	✓			<i>Ann Inspector</i>	<i>A Inspector</i>										
"	<i>Bangalow Palm</i>	40	tubes	✓			<i>Ann Inspector</i>	<i>A Inspector</i>										

The consignment described above has been inspected in accordance with the requirements of the ICA Operational Procedure *Property Freedom of Plants for Red Imported Fire Ant* [ICA-40].

Authorised Signatory	<i>Arthur John Signatory</i>	Signature	<i>A J Signatory</i>	Date	30 / 07 / 16
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IDENTIFICATION OF RED IMPORTED FIRE ANT

Red Imported Fire Ant (*Solenopsis invicta* Buren)

Background

RIFA is native to South America and was introduced to the United States in the 1930s where it has since become established in eleven of the south-eastern most states. RIFA was first detected in Australia in Brisbane in February 2001.

The ants are predominantly a public nuisance and social amenity pest because of their painful stings and their negative effect on other insects, small invertebrates, ground-nesting animals and birds, and even the young of larger species. RIFA infests recreation areas such as yards, parks, school playgrounds and reserves where they can be especially dangerous to young children and pets.

RIFA use their stingers to immobilise or kill their prey and to defend their nests from disturbance. Ants grab their victims by their mandibles (mouthparts) and sting repeatedly. Each sting injects a dose of venom that causes a painful burning sensation similar to a wasp or bee sting. The stings raise itching blisters that can become infected. Stings can also cause severe allergic reactions in some people including localised swelling, breathing difficulties, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, perspiration and even death in rare cases.

RIFA can also be a significant economic pest of agriculture because of its prevalence in nursery plants, orchards and pastures. RIFA harvest crop seeds, feed on and destroy seedlings, buds and fruits, and are even known to ring-bark young trees during times of drought. RIFA also tends aphids and mealy bugs, which in turn damage crops. RIFA mounds can damage agricultural equipment and their aggressive nature and painful stings can interfere with the harvesting of crops.

RIFA will also nest in machinery and equipment and have been known to remove the insulation from electrical wiring and block the action of mechanical devices by crowding between working parts.

Detection and Recognition

RIFA look very much like ordinary house or garden ants and are approximately 3-5mm long and reddish-brown to black in colour. RIFA are best distinguished by their aggressive swarming behaviour and their distinctive domed-shape nests.

RIFA nests appear as conical mounds 30-60cm high. Nests can range from 0.3m to 1m deep with lateral foraging tunnels extending up to 40m from the mound. RIFA colonies can be either monogyne (containing a single queen) or polygyne (containing multiple queens) with average colonies containing from 100,000 to 500,000 worker ants.

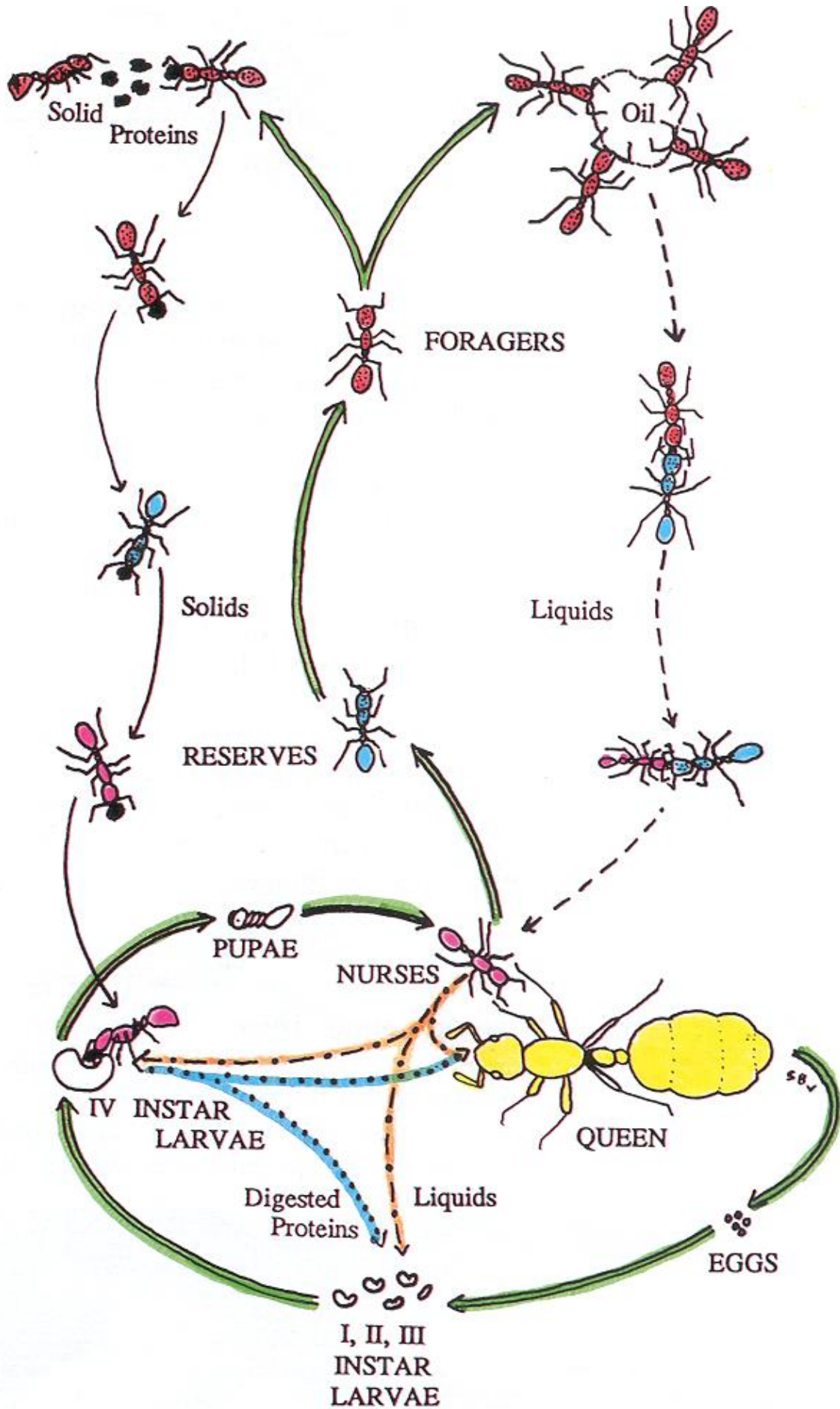
Mounds are normally found in undisturbed open areas such as lawns, pastures, roadside verges, unused cropping land and reserves. Nests are rarely found in frequently cultivated land. Nests may also be found in logs, around trees, under roads, footpaths and paved areas, under timber or other construction material, in disused machinery and equipment stored in contact with the ground, and even in air conditioners, electrical switch boxes and traffic lights.

When nests are disturbed worker ants will swarm from the nest to attack any animal nearby, including humans.

New colonies can be formed naturally through the flight of queens, which can spread the pest at a rate of 8 to 20 km per year. RIFA can also vacate, migrate and reform nests very quickly, especially if the original nest has been disturbed. Reproducing colonies can also be moved during floods or through human activity such as in movements of soil, mulches and potted plants, and as hitchhikers on trucks, trains, cars, agricultural machinery and earth moving equipment.

IDENTIFICATION OF RED IMPORTED FIRE ANT

Life Cycle of Red Imported Fire Ant



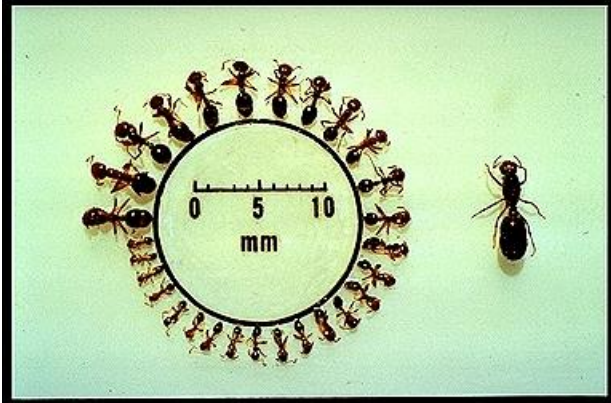
IDENTIFICATION OF RED IMPORTED FIRE ANT



RIFA worker ant (Drees)



RIFA worker ants (Drees)



Array of RIFA worker ant sizes (Porter)



RIFA worker ants tending queen (Texas Dept. of Ag. file photo)



RIFA worker ant biting and stinging (Texas Dept. of Ag. file photo)



RIFA colony infesting pot plant (Drees)



RIFA mound next to tree (Drees)



RIFA tending mealybug (Ree)



RIFA feeding on plant nectary (Vinson)

Photographs courtesy of Texas Imported Fire Ant Research and Management Project, Dept of Entomology, Texas A&M University