



IMPORTED FIRE ANT MODEL

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The model of an imported fire ant described and pictured herein was modified from “Build-A-Puzzle” distributed by Four Star International Trading Company (P.O. Box 118-860 Taipei, Taiwan) and was redesigned to incorporate some of the key features (characters) for identifying this species. Students and hobbyists constructing this model will learn about ant identification and some of the identifying (taxonomic) features that allow scientists (taxonomists) to identify this species, *Solenopsis invicta* Buren.



The plates attached can be used to trace the design onto a suitable substrate such as 1/8 inch-thick high quality plywood available at most hobby shops. The diagrams can also be reduced in size on a copy machine so that smaller versions can be made from card stock or card board.

INSTRUCTIONS:

Cut out the shapes, making slots as wide as the material used in construction. Sand the edges as necessary. Slide pieces together to match the numbers associated with each slot in the diagram. For cardboard versions, the pieces can be glued together so that the shape will be held in place.

TAXONOMIC FEATURES USED TO IDENTIFY IMPORTED FIRE ANTS:

- Keys to identify fire ants and other ant species can be found in Fire Ant Project Fact Sheets (FAPFS) numbers 010 and 013 (found on <http://fireant.tamu.edu> under “materials” and “fact sheets”).
- Fire ants have two nodes on the petiole
- Eyes are usually large
- The antennae have 10 segments with a two-segmented club (not shown on model)
- On the head, red imported fire ants have
 - a tooth at the base of the head capsule (clypeus)
 - Mandibles (jaws) with four “teeth” or dentations
 - First antennal segment (scale) reaching three-fourths or more between eyes and vertex (top of head)

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