



## Entomological Society of America Proposal Form for New Common Name or Change of ESA-Approved Common Name

Complete this form and e-mail to [pubs@entsoc.org](mailto:pubs@entsoc.org).

*Submissions will not be considered unless this form is filled out completely.*

The proposer is expected to be familiar with the rules, recommendations, and procedures outlined in the "Use and Submission of Common Names" on the ESA website at <https://www.entsoc.org/pubs/use-and-submission-common-names>.

### 1. Proposed new common name:

Needle ant

### 2. Previously approved common name (if any):

Asian needle ant (<https://entsoc.org/publications/common-names>)

Genus

Pachycondyla (1213)

Species

Author

Apply

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| COMMON NAME      | SCIENTIFIC NAME                | ORDER       | FAMILY     | AUTHOR  | GENUS        | SPECIES   | NOTES | DATE TAXONOMY LAST CHECKED |
|------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|------------|---------|--------------|-----------|-------|----------------------------|
| Asian needle ant | Pachycondyla chinensis (Emery) | HYMENOPTERA | Formicidae | (Emery) | Pachycondyla | chinensis |       |                            |

### 3. Scientific name (genus, species, author):

Order: Hymenoptera

Family: Formicidae

*Brachyponera chinensis* Emery 1895

Note that this ant's former classification as *Pachycondyla* (and the current genus associated with this species in the ESA database) was revised to *Brachyponera* in 2014:

Schmidt, C. A., and S. O. Shattuck. "The higher classification of the ant subfamily Ponerinae (Hymenoptera: Formicidae), with a review of ponerine ecology and behavior." *Zootaxa* 3817.1 (2014): 1-242.

### **Supporting Information**

#### **4. Please provide a clear and convincing explanation for why a common name is needed, possibly including but not limited to the taxon's economic, ecological, or medical importance, striking appearance, abundance, or conservation status:**

A common name is needed for *Brachyponera chinensis* because this is an ant which has been in the country for close to a century (Smith, 1934), and it raises public-health concerns due to its venomous sting (Nelder et al., 2006).

Native to East Asia, its abundance is high in parts of the USA where it is well-established (Guénard and Dunn, 2010), and its range is spreading (Guénard et al., 2018; Menchetti et al., 2022; Waters et al., 2022), it is often in the news, and it has been the focus of extensive research in the scientific literature.

The ant's name has changed over time, both scientifically and colloquially. Mackay and Mackay's revision of *Pachycondyla* (2010) does not mention a common name and it is also not mentioned in a study of its natural history in its native range in Japan (Gotoh and Ito, 2008).

In Japan, its common name is: Oo-hari-ari, roughly translated as giant needle ant. The ant however, is quite small and the giant is likely a reference to its long stinger.

We are requesting a change to the common name, removing "Asian" and leaving "Needle ant" for simplicity and clarity. There are many ants from Asia, including many other ponerine ants in the same subfamily and genus. The ant has been introduced to many places around the world and is now well established not only in Asia (including native and introduced regions there), but also in North America and widely in the United States, often as one of the only conspicuous ponerine ants that might be commonly encountered. Despite its near-century-old introduction to the USA, mass media outlets often report on the spread of *B. chinensis* with alarmism and sensationalism (see list below). Its current common name helps the media intentionally or unintentionally spread the misinformed suggestion that

there is a new/ongoing invasion and that the ant is actively invading from Asia when neither of these is accurate. More broadly, retaining geographic labels in common names may unintentionally reinforce stereotypes or misconceptions by unnecessarily linking species to a particular region, even when their current distribution and ecological impacts extend far beyond their place of origin.

Bertelsmeier, Cleo, Benoît Guénard, and Franck Courchamp. "Climate change may boost the invasion of the Asian needle ant." *PLoS One* 8.10 (2013): e75438.

Guénard, Benoit, and Robert R. Dunn. "A new (old), invasive ant in the hardwood forests of eastern North America and its potentially widespread impacts." *PLoS One* 5.7 (2010): e11614.

Guénard, Benoit, James K. Wetterer, and Joe A. MacGown. "Global and temporal spread of a taxonomically challenging invasive ant, *Brachyponera chinensis* (Hymenoptera: Formicidae)." *Florida Entomologist* 101.4 (2018): 649-656.

MacGown, Joe A. "The Asian Needle Ant, *Brachyponera chinensis* (Hymenoptera: Formicidae) in the USA: Identification, Biology, and Distribution." *Mississippi Entomological Museum* 1 (2025): 14.

Mackay, W.P., Mackay, E.E. 2010. The systematics and biology of the New World ants of the genus *Pachycondyla* (Hymenoptera: Formicidae). Edwin Mellon Press, Lewiston.

Menchetti, Mattia, et al. "The worrying arrival of the invasive Asian needle ant *Brachyponera chinensis* in Europe (Hymenoptera: Formicidae)." *Zootaxa* 5115.1 (2022): 146-150.

Nelder, Mark P., et al. "Emergence of the introduced ant *Pachycondyla chinensis* (Formicidae: Ponerinae) as a public health threat in the southeastern United States." *Journal of Medical Entomology* 43.5 (2006): 1094-1098.

Smith, M. 1934. Ponerine ants of the genus *Euponera* in the United States. *Annals of the Entomological Society of America* 27: 557–564.

Waters, Jane S., et al. "Survey of ants (Hymenoptera, Formicidae) in the city of Providence (Rhode Island, United States) and a new northern-most record for *Brachyponera chinensis* (Emery, 1895)." *Check List* 18.6 (2022): 1347-1368.

##### **5. Stage or characteristic to which the proposed common name refers.**

(If the description involves a physical feature, it is strongly encouraged that an image of the organism be provided with this submission.)

N/A

## 6. Distribution (include references):

The ant *Brachyponera chinensis* is native to the East Asian continent, but we do not yet have a precise understanding of its distribution in its native range (Guénard et al., 2018). The ant was identified in the United States on plants shipped from Japan in the early 1900s, it was also identified on plants shipped from Japan in Germany at the same time, though the only verifiable European collection was made recently, and in Italy (Menchetti et al., 2022). It has also been reported in New Zealand, Guam, Nepal, and the Solomon Islands (Nelder et al., 2006). In the United States, the ant is well established in the mid-Atlantic region, though it is clear that the ant is being identified in an increasing number of states ranging from Louisiana to Massachusetts. At least one media outlet reports they have been found in Washington state.

Guénard, Benoit, James K. Wetterer, and Joe A. MacGown. "Global and temporal spread of a taxonomically challenging invasive ant, *Brachyponera chinensis* (Hymenoptera: Formicidae)." *Florida Entomologist* 101.4 (2018): 649-656.

Menchetti, Mattia, et al. "The worrying arrival of the invasive Asian needle ant *Brachyponera chinensis* in Europe (Hymenoptera: Formicidae)." *Zootaxa* 5115.1 (2022): 146-150.

Nelder, Mark P., et al. "Emergence of the introduced ant *Pachycondyla chinensis* (Formicidae: Ponerinae) as a public health threat in the southeastern United States." *Journal of Medical Entomology* 43.5 (2006): 1094-1098.

## 7. Principal hosts (include references):

N/A

## 8. Please provide multiple references indicating clearly that the proposed name is already established and ideally widespread in use. If the name has been newly coined for purposes of this application, please state so:

The proposed new common name ("Needle ant") was published in the scientific literature in 2022:

Waters, Jane S., et al. "Survey of ants (Hymenoptera, Formicidae) in the city of Providence (Rhode Island, United States) and a new northern-most record for *Brachyponera chinensis* (Emery, 1895)." *Check List* 18.6 (2022).

The current name (“Asian Needle Ant”) has been widely in use, both in the scientific literature (see references above) and in the popular press. A search on Google News ([news.google.com](https://news.google.com)) performed on May 21, 2026 returned N=100 mentions of the ant from radio, TV, digital, and print media spanning coverage in Boston to Arizona in the USA and a few international outlets as well, all in less than a year (since June 2025).

1. UGA Today; Are Asian needle ants your backyard's next invasive threat? Apr 23; By Savannah Peat
2. Milwaukee Journal Sentinel; This invasive ant has spread to more than 20 states, including Wisconsin, 10 days ago; By Blaise Mesa
3. Tallahassee Democrat; Is the venomous Asian needle ant found in Florida? Where it was spotted; 16 days ago; By Samantha Neely
4. WKYT; Invasive ant species raising concerns in Kentucky; 15 days ago
5. NonStop Local KHQ; Asian needle ant found in Pacific Northwest; 14 days ago
6. 11Alive.com; Asian needle ant threat rises in Southeast; UGA warns of serious sting risk; Apr 24
7. Cape Cod Times; Asian needle ant found in MA. How to spot one.; Apr 23; By Julia Gomez & Rin Velasco
8. thelensnola.org; Researchers warn of threats – to humans and native plants – from little-known ant; 6 days ago; By Rebecca Grapevine
9. Shreveport Times; Asian needle ants have potentially deadly stings. Where they're found; Apr 16; By Presley Bo Tyler
10. Everett Post; A New Dangerous Pest Emerging in the North Sound – The Asian Needle Ant; 10 days ago
11. investigatetv.com; Invasive Asian needle ant spreads to 22 states with painful, potentially deadly sting; Apr 1; By Alex Flippin
12. People.com; Invasive Ant Species with Potentially Deadly Sting Raises Concern in American States; 17 days ago; By Angel Saunders
13. WSET; Painful-stinging Asian needle ants spreading across the US, experts say; Apr 15; By Rachel Branning
14. WSB-TV; Woman says Asian needle ant stings almost killed her: 'I lost all movement of my muscles'; Apr 24; By TOM REGAN
15. WRBL; Potentially deadly Asian needle ant reemerges, UGA researchers warn; Apr 23; By Jazmine Mills
16. The Tennessean; How to spot the Asian ant with the sting that lasts for weeks; 14 days ago; By Mackensy Lunsford
17. MSN; Deadly Asian needle ant emerging in Georgia; 2 days ago
18. Greenville Online; Pesky needle ants have invaded area. How to spot them, stay safe in SC; Apr 29; By Nina Tran
19. Yahoo; Asian needle ants deliver 'ghost' stings that can hospitalize — here's how to identify them; 19 days ago; By Ben Stern
20. Knoxville News Sentinel; Venomous Asian needle ant is in Tennessee. Its sting can be dangerous; Apr 22; By Allison Kiehl
21. Columbus Ledger-Enquirer; There's a new invasive species in GA, and it can send you to the ER. Here's what to know; 16 days ago; By Sundi Rose
22. AL.com; Invasive species warning: 'Hidden' ant with dangerous venom reported in Southeast; 18 days ago; By Heather Gann

23. The Cool Down; Gardeners warned that tiny ant with potentially lethal sting is rapidly spreading across US; Apr 29
24. The Clarion-Ledger; What does an Asian needle ant look like? See invasive species up close; Apr 9
25. WRAL; Planning to mulch? Check your bags for stinging ants; Apr 9; By Grace Hayba
26. The Clarion-Ledger; Asian needle ants are in Mississippi. Know what they look like; Apr 9; By Bonnie Bolden
27. Montgomery Advertiser; Are there Asian needle ants in Alabama? Is their bite dangerous?; Apr 20; By Jennifer Lindahl
28. 95.5 WSB; UGA researchers warn of growing threat from Asian needle ants in Georgia; Apr 23
29. NDTV; 20 US States On Alert As Venomous Chinese Ant Silently Takes Over America; 15 days ago; By Nikhil Pandey
30. Cleveland 19 News; Move over Lantern Fly, the Asian Needle Ant has powerful sting; Apr 10; By Dan Deroos
31. Pest Control Technology; Invasive Asian Needle Ants Pose Rising Health, Ecological Threats; Sep 16, 2025
32. MSN; Venomous Asian needle ant spreads to 20 U.S. states; 17 days ago
33. MSN; How to spot the Asian ant with the sting that lasts for weeks; 4 days ago
34. The Times of India; US warns as Asian needle ant reaches over 20 states; experts warn of sharp, painful attacks; 15 days ago
35. Yahoo; Ouch! Asian Needle Ants Now Stinging Their Way Across Texas And 20+ States; 11 days ago
36. bgr.com; These Venomous Ants Are Invading The Southeast U.S. — Here's How To Spot Them; Apr 24; By Aaron Greenbaum
37. The State; This tiny invasive ant in SC packs a mean, possibly deadly, sting and could be hiding in your mulch; Apr 15; By Lyn Riddle
38. MSN; Venomous Asian needle ants rapidly spread to 20 US states; 17 days ago
39. USA Today; An invasive ant with a potentially deadly sting is spreading in the US; Apr 9; By Julia Gomez
40. The Cool Down; 'I lost all movement of my muscles': Woman describes near-death experience after sting from Asian needle ant; 6 days ago
41. USA Today; Are stinging Asian needle ants invading in your state? We show where.; Apr 12; By Janet Loehrke
42. azcentral.com and The Arizona Republic; This ant with a deadly stinger is spreading in US. Is it in Arizona?; Apr 11; By Tiffany Acosta
43. AOL.com; Venomous Asian needle ant is in Mississippi. Its sting can be dangerous; 10 days ago; By Bonnie Bolden
44. Detroit Free Press; Invasive ants nearing Michigan could inflict painful stings; Apr 10; By Julia Gomez & Jenna Prestininzi
45. WCAX; Invasive Asian needle ant spreads to 22 states with painful, potentially deadly sting; Mar 9
46. AZ Family; Invasive Asian needle ant spreads to 22 states with painful, potentially deadly sting; Mar 9
47. MSN; Researchers track expansion of Asian needle ant in Mississippi; 4 days ago; By Sethanie Smith
48. Bergen Record; Will stinging Asian needle ants come to NJ? They may already be here; Apr 16; By Amanda Wallace

49. fox10tv.com; Invasive Asian needle ant spreads to 22 states with painful, potentially deadly sting; Mar 9
50. Wilmington Star-News; Why NC's newest invasive ant, now found across the state, poses a triple threat; Nov 3, 2025; By Gareth McGrath
51. WSB-TV; Woman says Asian needle ant stings almost killed her: 'I lost all movement of my muscles; Apr 24
52. WVLT; Invasive Asian needle ant spreads to 22 states with painful, potentially deadly sting; Mar 9
53. WAFB; Invasive Asian needle ant spreads to 22 states with painful, potentially deadly sting; Mar 9
54. KPTV; Invasive Asian needle ant spreads to 22 states with painful, potentially deadly sting; Mar 9
55. Yahoo; Invasive Ant Spreading to 20+ States With Possibly Deadly Sting; Apr 10
56. Yahoo; Only two-tenths of an inch big, this ant carries a deadly sting and has spread to 22 states; Apr 12; By Noah Simon Jampol
57. MSN; US warns as Asian needle ant reaches over 20 states; experts warn of sharp, painful attacks; 13 days ago
58. WGN Radio 720; What to know about the Asian Needle Ant; Apr 27; By Jack Heinrich
59. MSN; Potentially deadly Asian needle ant reemerges, UGA researchers warn; 7 days ago; By Jazmine Mills
60. Cleveland 19 News; Move over Lantern Fly, the Asian Needle Ant has powerful sting; Apr 10
61. Darkhorse Press; What to know about Asian needle ants as Mississippi tracks invasive species; Apr 15; By Morgan Howard
62. The Indian Express; Asian needle ant: Everything you need to know about the venomous species spreading in US; 15 days ago
63. Diario AS; James Voght, entomologist, on the invasive Asian needle ant, "These ants are able to invade forests and take o; 13 days ago; By Greg Heilman
64. WDBJ7; Invasive Asian needle ant spreads to 22 states with painful, potentially deadly sting; Mar 9
65. The Cool Down; Experts raise red flags after deadly, venomous ant found to be expanding through US: 'Commonly enters homes and other buildings'; Nov 19; By Zack Ehrmann
66. The Times of India; Deadly Asian needle ants invade US: What you should know and how to stay safe; 14 days ago
67. The Weather Network; Warm weather helps invasive ant with life-threatening sting spread north; 14 days ago; By Cheryl Santa Maria
68. KABB; Painful-stinging Asian needle ants spreading across the US, experts say; Apr 15; By Rachel Branning
69. WOWT; Invasive Asian needle ant spreads to 22 states with painful, potentially deadly sting; Mar 9
70. Mississippi State University; MSU entomologists study expansion of Asian needle ant in Mississippi; Jun 10, 2025
71. Daily Express US; Deadly ant with stinger that can cause 'severe pain' found in 20 states: mapped; 16 days ago
72. Outdoors with Bear Grylls; Ant With Potentially Deadly Sting Has Invaded The U.S. — What You Need To Know; Apr 13; By Stephanie Heath
73. KMVT; Invasive Asian needle ant spreads to 22 states with painful, potentially deadly sting; Mar 9

74. 13WMAZ; Spring brings pest surge to Central Georgia; invasive ants pose health risks, experts say; Apr 15; By Ellie Millikan
75. Enterprise News; Was Bridgewater man stung by invasive Asian needle ant? What an entomologist thinks; Aug 8, 2025; By Chris Helms
76. WSMV; Invasive Asian needle ant spreads to 22 states with painful, potentially deadly sting; Mar 9
77. 97.3 The Dawg; Invasive Species Confirmed in Louisiana – 'Sting Like Liquid Fire'; Apr 6; By Bruce Mikells
78. WTVC; Georgia entomologist warns of potentially deadly Asian needle ant threat this summer; Jun 23, 2025; By Ray Collado
79. AOL.com; Venomous Asian needle ants are near Delaware. What to watch for; Apr 18; By Julia Gomez
80. CBS News; Asian needle ant's sting left Massachusetts man feeling sick: "I could feel the pain spreading."; Jul 2, 2025; By Jordyn Jagolinzer
81. Bucyrus Telegraph-Forum; Invasive Asian needle ants causing concern among Ohioans; Jul 9, 2025; By Alex Perry
82. Scientific American; This Invasive Ant's Sting Is like Fiberglass under the Skin. Here's How to Avoid It; Jun 13, 2025; By Stephanie Pappas
83. NOLA.com; These stinging, potentially deadly ants have made their way to Louisiana. Here's what to know.; Jun 30, 2025; By Hannah Levitan
84. WVTF; Researchers are working to slow the spread of Asian needle ants. Here's how you can help; Jul 1, 2025; By Roxy Todd
85. thv11.com; Invasive Asian needle ant with potentially fatal sting spotted in Arkansas; Jun 17, 2025; By Maya Ellison
86. Columbia Missourian; Asian needle ant could show up in Missouri this summer; Jul 10, 2025
87. KATV; Asian needle ants found in Arkansas; Jun 23, 2025; By Payton Dhooge, Kaelin Clay & Isley Gooden
88. Pest Management Professional; Invasive Asian needle ants are here to stay; Aug 5, 2025
89. louisianaradionetwork.com; Invasive Asian needle ant, native to Japan and China, detected in East Baton Rouge Parish; Jul 8, 2025
90. SouthCoastToday.com; Stinging, invasive Asian needle ants found in MA. Here's where, why they're a problem; Jun 16, 2025; By Seth Jacobson
91. Florida Today; Tiny Asian needle ant packs powerful, potentially fatal, sting. Compare it to Florida fire ant; Jun 16, 2025
92. FOX 5 Atlanta; Asian Needle Ant invasion: What you need to know about their stings; Jun 11, 2025; By Joyce Lupiani
93. The Asheville Citizen Times; 'Unusual' invasive Asian needle ants are found in NC: Here's why they're a problem; Jun 11, 2025; By Iris Seaton
94. ABC11 Raleigh-Durham; Asian Needle Ants NC | State experts share insights and concerns about stinging ants detected in North Carolina; Jun 10, 2025; By Elaina Athans
95. WAPT; MSU: Asian needle ant invasion spreading in Mississippi; Jun 11, 2025
96. CBS News; Man says he was stung by Asian needle ant near his backyard pool; Jul 2, 2025
97. A-Z Animals; Asian Needle Ants Are Taking Over Forests and Cities Across the U.S.; Jun 29, 2025
98. CBS News; Asian needle ants with a potentially fatal sting have spread across multiple states. Here's what to know.; Jun 10, 2025; By Stephen A. Smith

99. Unfiltered with Kiran; Stinging invasive ant species found in Louisiana; Jul 7, 2025; By Allyson Bird
100. Spectrum News; What you need to know about the deadly invasive ant found in Texas; Jun 11, 2025; By Kaila Garrett

**9. Please identify any common names in use, including those used by indigenous peoples in the insect's area of origin, that have been applied to this taxon, other than the one herein proposed, with references. Please briefly describe the methods used to find alternative names and, if necessary, justify why each alternate name is inadequate:**

In a Clemson University dissertation, Hamilton Allen mentions that, "the Asian needle ant is also known as the "giant needle ant" or "oo-hari-ari" in its native Japan." We can confirm that the Japanese name is specific to the species, not the overall genus (*Pachycondyla* or *Brachyponera*). The adjective, giant, is said to reference the size of its stinger; its body size is small to intermediate for a Ponerine ant. It is larger than other native Ponerine ants in New England, but quite smaller than Ponerine ants elsewhere, and its sting is much less painful. Although we considered keeping the descriptor "giant" in its name, this would only serve to add confusion given the ant's diminutive size.

[https://www.antwiki.org/wiki/Common\\_Names](https://www.antwiki.org/wiki/Common_Names)

Allen, Hamilton Ross. Biology and Behavior of the Asian Needle Ant, *Brachyponera chinensis* (Emery). Diss. Clemson University, 2017.

**10. Please identify any other organisms to which your proposed common name could apply, giving careful consideration to closely related taxa. Please justify why the proposed common name is (i) unsuitable for each of those taxa and/or (ii) better suited for the proposed taxon:**

It is not apparent that there are any other organisms to which our proposed common name might apply or be confused with.

Out of almost 300 common-named ants listed on AntWiki ([https://www.antwiki.org/wiki/Common\\_Names](https://www.antwiki.org/wiki/Common_Names)), there are no other ants with either "Asian" or "Needle" included in their common name.

According to the ESA common names database, there are 41 ant species (Formicidae) with common names and there is no other species using either "Asian" or "Needle" in its name.

Removing the adjective "Asian" to use "Needle ant" as the common name for *B. chinensis* will not risk confusion with any other species.

**11. Please document your efforts to consult with entomologists (including taxonomic specialists), colleagues, or other professionals who work with the taxon as to the suitability and need for the proposed common name. Please note that this is an important element of your proposal; proposals that do not document these steps are less likely to be successful.**

We received enthusiastic and supportive endorsement from the following entomologists and myrmecologists:

Dr. Corrie Moreau, Cornell University

Dr. Rebecca Clark, Sienna College

Dr. Steven Alm, University of Rhode Island

Dr. Andrew Suarez, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

We wrote to but did not hear back from either Rob Dunn or Benoit Guénard.

Dr. Christina Kwapich was supportive with additional feedback, “I do understand why you would be interested in decoupling a whole continent from an ill-conceived concept that has a negative connotations, tied to a similarly blameless animal in its introduced range” but also noted that the “Asian” adjective isn’t strictly an inaccurate one given the native range for the species and the need for more comprehensive reform with respect to species naming practices.

Informally polled at the 2026 meeting of the International Union for the Study of Social Insects, many colleagues also supported the name change including Joan Herbers (Ohio State U.) and Cleo Bertelsmaier (Lausanne).

**Proposed by: Dr. Jane Waters, Dr. Manuela Ramalho, and Dr. Marianne Alleyne.**

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**Date submitted: 12 September 2026**

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