



7

Mature mounds may reach 24-40 inches wide and over 15 inches high. These mature colonies will contain 200,000-400,000 workers with the queen laying nearly her own weight in eggs per day.



1

Mating flights occur from mature colonies. These colonies produce large numbers of winged female (A) and male (B) reproductives called alates.



2

Mating flights usually occur on a sunny day 1-2 days after a rain when temperatures are above 75° F. Flights can occur from mature colonies during any time of the year, but most occur in spring and fall.

Fire Ant Biology: Colony Establishment



6

During the first few months, the mound may not be visible. Within 6 months, the mound reaches 3-6 inches across, 1-2 inches high and contains several thousand ants.

3

Little is known of mating habits of fire ants once they are in the air. Mating takes place between 300 to 800 feet high. After mating, the female seeks moist or reflective surfaces on which to land, and the male dies. During and just after the mating flight, the female is most vulnerable to predators, especially other fire ants, and the environment.



5

Once workers are produced, the newly mated female becomes a queen, tended by workers. After about a month, the workers open the colony, begin foraging and constructing the mound.



4

A new colony is founded by a single mated female. Once a female lands, she removes her wings, burrows into the soil, and begins to lay eggs.