

Invasive Ant Threat



INFORMATION SHEET Number 36 • *Tetramorium rhenanum*

Risk: Medium

Tetramorium rhenanum Schulz

Taxonomic Category

Family:	Formicidae
Subfamily:	Myrmicinae
Tribe:	Tetramoriini
Genus:	<i>Tetramorium</i>
Species:	<i>rhenanum</i>

Common name(s): None found.

Original name: *Tetramorium rhenanum* Schulz

General Description

Identification

Size: monomorphic, total length 3–4 mm.

Colour: body uniformly black-brown, some individuals with orange-brown extremities.

Surface sculpture: distinguishable from other *Tetramorium*, e.g., *T. caespitum* by its densely reticulated integument, especially the distinct wrinkles of the petiolar and postpetiolar nodes.

General description: clypeus weakly convex; posterior of head weakly concave; antennae 12-segmented, the scape not reaching the posterior of head. Mandible with 6–7 teeth, apical tooth clearly larger than all other teeth. Propodeum dorsally with 2 short triangular spines, as long as they are wide at the surface of the propodeum; additionally a pair of flanges (metapleural lobes) present near the insertion of the petiole. Two nodes (petiole and postpetiole) present. Sting present.

Sources: Schulz 1996

Formal description: Schulz 1996 (in German)

Only described very recently (Schulz 1996) and very similar to *T. caespitum* and *T. impurum* (Forester), but Felke and Sanetra (1997) provide biochemical evidence of its distinct identity.

Behavioural and Biological Characteristics

Feeding and foraging

In its introduced range it has largely displaced native surface foraging ants larger than itself, leaving only arboreal *Camponotus*, *Tapinoma sessile*, minute Myrmicinae, such as *Leptothorax*, *Solenopsis* and *Monomorium*, and subterranean species such as *Ponera* and *Brachymyrmex* (www24).

Colony characteristics

Polygyne with nests containing 10 or more queens (Felke & Sanetra 1997).

Dispersal

No information found. As colonies are polygynous dispersal may be by colony budding.

Habitats occupied

Xeric (dry) limestone grasslands within its native range (www24). Within its introduced range mostly restricted to human habitat but has been found in a native xeric grassland habitat known as a dolomite glade (www24).

Global Distribution (See map)

Native to

Germany where recorded only from hot dry (xerothermic) habitats along the Rhine River (Felke & Sanetra 1997). Also reported from France (Schulz 1996) and may occur elsewhere in central Europe (unconfirmed).

Introduced to

The northern USA states of Illinois and Missouri (www24).

History of spread

Originally found in urban and suburban habitats of the metropolitan area of St Louis, Missouri, it has spread to neighbouring counties and Illinois (www24). Originally thought to be a *T. caespitum* equivalent of the polygyne fire ant (www24).

Interception history at NZ border

Not intercepted at New Zealand border.

Justification for Inclusion as a Threat

A small polygyne species from Central Europe that has established in the USA (www24). In the USA it is present in urban and suburban habitats and in native grassland, and has displaced almost all native ants larger than itself (www24). The presence of other adventive *Tetramorium* in New Zealand could allow this species to establish unnoticed.

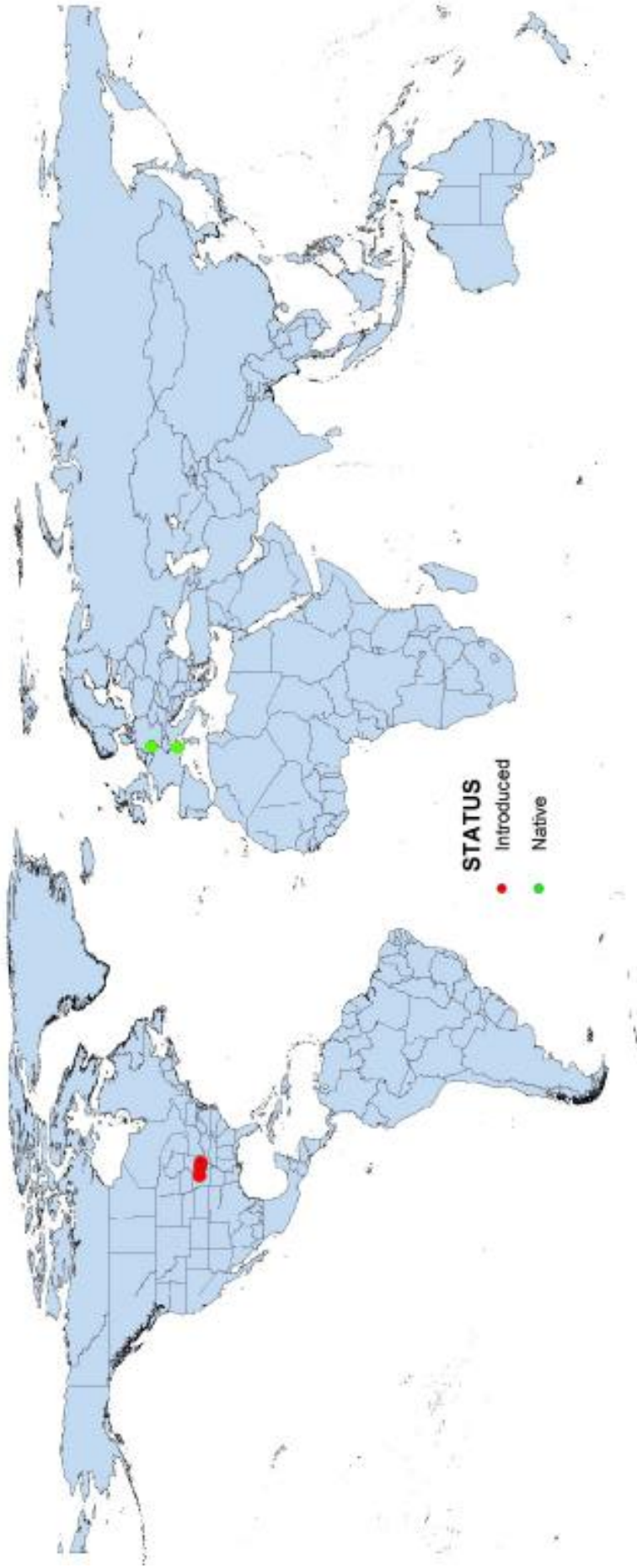
Mitigating factors

Not in the southern hemisphere. Not intercepted at New Zealand border. Only a single introduction known outside its native range.

Control Technologies

None reported

Compiled by Richard Harris & Jo Berry



Global distribution of *Tetramorium rhenanum* Schulz