

Private Bag 78 Hobart
Tasmania 7001 Australia
evansmj@postoffice.utas.edu.au



SCHOOL OF GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

19th of March 2008

Invitation to participate in a survey regarding the presence or absence of the jack jumper ant in Hobart properties.

Dear participant,

We are writing to invite you to participate in a research project investigating the preferred habitat of the jack jumper ant around Hobart.

Purpose of the study

The research project's main aim is to ascertain the preferred habitat of the jack jumper ant. The attached questionnaire contains questions regarding your garden and whether the jack jumper ant is present or absent. Please note that it is important that we receive questionnaires from participants who have gardens without the ant just as much as we receive them from participants who have seen ants in their gardens. So even if you have never seen a jack jumper ant in your garden, we are still interested in the answers you may provide.

Investigators

The project is being undertaken by Maldwyn Evans, as part of the requirements for a Master of Environmental Management. The Chief Investigator, and Maldwyn's supervisor for the project, is Dr Peter McQuillan.

Importance of your participation

An understanding of the behaviour and habitat as well as the circumstances in which jack jumper stings are likely to occur may provide information to help to reduce the likelihood of jack jumper stings. The answers that you provide will guide future management recommendations to minimise the threat to humans from jack jumper stings by helping to predict and identify areas of Hobart and surrounds where there is a high risk of a human-jack jumper encounter. Your answers may also help offer management guidelines for allergy sufferers to minimise the risk of jack jumpers taking up residence in their gardens and properties.

What you are asked to do

You are asked to fill out the attached questionnaire. The questionnaire contains questions regarding various environmental variables on your property (yard and buildings) and the presence or absence of the jack jumper ant in your garden. The questionnaire should take no longer than 20 minutes to complete. Please note: your answers will be just as valid if you have never seen a jack jumper ant or nest on your property as if you have.

Voluntary and anonymous

The questionnaire is anonymous and your personal details are not requested. However, section C of the survey asks you for your address. The information provided in this section will help us to calculate the proximity to native bush of your garden as well as help identify locations within Hobart that jack jumpers reside in. Your address will not be published in any way. Only the proximity to native bush and suburb will be recorded in the data and the thesis or published work. Entering your address is completely voluntary and if you wish to leave this field blank then you are free to do so. Your consent to participate in this study is evidenced by your completion and return of the questionnaire.

No risk in participation

There are no risks involved in the study. You are being asked to note the presence or absence of the jack jumper ant or jack jumper ant nests on your property. The jack jumper ant can administer a painful and sometimes dangerous sting. In no way are you being asked to interfere with the ant or nest and therefore put yourself at risk of a jack jumper sting.

Contacts

If you have any comments or questions, please feel free to contact:

Dr Peter McQuillan; Tel: (03) 62262840 Email: p.b.mcquillan@utas.edu.au

or

Maldwyn John Evans; Email: evansmj@utas.edu.au

Results of the study

As a participant in the study, you will be given the opportunity to read the final thesis. This will be available in the School of Geography and Environmental Studies, University of Tasmania towards the beginning of September 2008.

Concerns or complaints

This project has received ethical approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee (Tasmania) Network. If you have any concerns of an ethical nature or complaints about the manner in which the project is conducted, please contact the Executive Officer of the Network (telephone: 03 6226 7479, email human.ethics@utas.edu.au.)

Thank you for your time, and we hope that you are willing to spend the 5-20 minutes it will take to answer the questionnaire.

Kind regards,

Maldwyn John Evans
Investigator