

First Report of *Brachymyrex obscurior* Forel (Hymenoptera: Formicidae) from Georgia¹

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J. Entomol. Sci. 40(2): 250-251 (April 2005)

Key Words *Brachymyrmex obscurior*, Formicidae, ground-dwelling ants, state record

Brachymyrmex obscurior Forel (Hymenoptera: Formicidae) has not been previously reported from Georgia (Ipser et al. 2004. Florida Entomol. 87:253-260). Five species of the genus are reported from Florida (Deyrup 2003. Florida Entomol. 86: 43-48), and only two of those (*B. depilis* Emery and *B. musculus* Forel) were discovered in a recent survey of ground-dwelling ant species in Georgia (Ipser et al. 2004).

Tschinkel and Hess (1999. Ann. Entomol. Soc. Am. 92: 63-70) report *B. obscurior* as a ground-nesting species that inhabits wooded areas, primarily longleaf pine (*Pinus palustris* Miller) and slash pine (*Pinus elliotti* Engelm) with mixed species of hardwoods. The recent Georgia survey included such habitats, but those collections did not yield specimens of *B. obscurior*.

On 09 September 2003, workers of *B. obscurior* were discovered foraging sugar residue on a laboratory countertop on the second floor of the Cowart Building on the University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Griffin Campus in Griffin (Spalding Co.), GA. Specimens were collected, placed in 70% ethyl alcohol, and later verified as *B. obscurior* workers. Voucher specimens have been deposited in the University of Georgia Natural History Museum (Athens, GA).

On 05 May 2004, additional workers were discovered in the same laboratory within an electrical outlet on a wall distant from the earlier collection of workers. Containers with sugar water and freeze-dried crickets and a brood box were placed next to the outlet to stimulate foraging and possible nesting within the brood box. Workers foraged on the sugar water and the crickets, but they did not inhabit the brood box. Later that month (25 May 2004), another colony of *B. obscurior* was found next to a side-

¹Received 24 June 2004; accepted for publication 29 November 2004.

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walk in Barnesville (Lamar Co.), GA. Workers from both colonies were collected and verified as *B. obscurior*.

These collections were subsequent to the survey conducted by Ipser et al. (2004). All three collections were from either a building or an urbanized site, neither of which were targeted in the aforementioned survey for ground-dwelling species. Based upon these observations of nesting and foraging activities, *B. obscurior* may be a potential urban ant pest in Georgia. These observations and collections also bring the total number of ground-dwelling ant taxa in Georgia to 145.