

normally with toothlike or other irregularities. Thorax commonly sculptured and opaque on mesopleuron and side of epinotum, this sculpturing sometimes extending onto dorsum of epinotum. Petiolar node narrow in profile, especially dorsally, where it is somewhat bladelikey. Color so highly variable as to defy accurate description; some individuals largely yellowish or light redish, others largely blackish, yet others with a mingling of light and dark colors. Species readily distinguished by the extraordinarily large head; strongly incurved and often toothless mandible; narrow petiolar node with sharp bladelikey summit (in profile); and anterior border of mesopleuron, which is usually irregular in outline with spines or other projections.

Biology and Economic Importance

This species closely resembles *S. xyloni* in biology and economic importance. Until the introduction of the imported fire ant into Florida, *geminata* was not only the most common but the worst fire ant pest in that State. *S. geminata* usually nests in the ground, from which it throws out earth in irregular piles, some of which may be as large as a bushel basket. The piles are commonly constructed around clumps of vegetation. The species may also nest in the soil under objects or in rotting wood. The ants usually nest in open areas in dry to moist soil of variable composition. Although no detailed studies have been made on the biology of this species, observations to date suggest possibly no more than one reproductive female per nest. Males and females have been seen making nuptial flights from late May to early June. Colonies are frequently populous. The fire ant is especially noted for its predacious habits. Experiments conducted in Puerto Rico have shown that up to 91 percent of pupae of flies such as *Musca domestica* (Linnaeus), *Callitroga macellaria* (Fabricius), and *Sarcophaga* spp. have been destroyed by the fire ant and other ants. The fire ant is considered to be one of the most important predators of all the ants. It has been shown experimentally that workers of the fire ant can carry viable germs of dysentery on their bodies for at least 24 hours. This species affects man in ways almost identical to those of *xyloni* and its food preferences are quite similar. These ants have been reported to gnaw holes in rubber surgical gloves.

References: Wheeler, 1914, pp. 164-165; Clark, 1931, p. 5; Smith, 1936, pp. 838-839; Travis, 1941, pp. 15-22; Lindquist, 1942, pp. 850-852; Griffiths, 1942, pp. 271-272; Pimentel, 1955, pp. 28-30.

Solenopsis saevissima richteri Forel

Imported fire ant. This form has been introduced from South America, probably Argentina; *richteri* is a subspecies of *saevissima* (F. Sm.), a smooth, shiny, yellowish ant whose native home is also South America. It was first officially recorded in the United States from Mobile, Ala., in 1930, but apparently had been present there for at least 10 to 12 years. Infestations of various extent are now present in the Southern States from North Carolina and Florida west to Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas, exclusive of Tennessee. There is no question that man has played an important role in the spread of this ant by his commercial activities. As hitch hikers, the ants have