



Figure 22.—*Solenopsis saevissima richteri* Forel, imported fire ant: a, Lateral view of worker; b, right mandible showing shape of mandible and number and arrangement of teeth.

been carried by trucks, trains, and private cars. They have also been spread by shipments of nursery stock, building materials, logs, stumps, and soil. Their spread by flight, crawling, or by heavy rain storms is apparently of less significance.

### Taxonomic Characters

*Subfamily and generic characters:* Same as for *xyloni*. *Specific characters:* Worker 2.8–6 mm. long. Head not remarkably large, distinctly less than twice as broad as pronotum. Mandible not sharply curved inward or bowed as in *geminata*, masticatory border with four well-defined teeth (fig. 22,b). Apex of scape extending more than half the distance between upper border of eye and posterior border of head. Anterior border of mesopleuron continuous, not bearing teeth or irregular projections. Mesopleuron and side of epinotum with sculpture dense enough to appear subopaque. Dorsal surface of petiolar and postpetiolar nodes, when viewed from above and behind, bearing apparent longitudinal furrows or foveolae. Typical species with deep piceous brown or blackish body except for a broad band of yellowish red at base of gaster. Non-typical form varying so widely in color as to defy accurate description; in general, red and black predominate and are usually intermingled. Reddish color most commonly covers the body except much of the gaster, which is blackish. Non-typical form is by far the most common.

### Biology and Economic Importance

The complete biology of *richteri* is unknown. The ants usually nest in the soil in open areas, less frequently in wooded areas in or around stumps and logs. Nests may be constructed in various types of soil ranging from loose to compact and varying greatly in the amount of moisture. In open areas, the earth is usually thrown from the nests in piles ranging from a few inches to as much as 3 feet or more in height. The larger mounds are generally dome-shaped or conical. The mound contains numerous galleries and chambers, both above and below the soil level. The ants frequently abandon one nest site