

variable length. Metasternum extended posteriorly on each side to form a distinct spine or rounded lamella. Femora noticeably enlarged. Abdominal pedicel composed of two segments, the petiole and postpetiole. Sting present but not always exerted. *Specific characters:* Workers approximately 2.5–3 mm. in length. Apex of scape lacking more than its greatest width of attaining posterior border of head. Frontal carinae placed far apart, the distance between them widening posteriorly, not forming scrobes for the reception of antennal scapes. Clypeus with a prominent median carina and with a number of less distinct lateral carinae. Mesoepinotal suture forming a strongly defined constriction both laterally and dorsally on thorax. Femora and tibiae noticeably enlarged. Epinotum with a pair of very short spines or tubercles. Postpetiolar node (viewed from above) distinctly wider than long. Dorsal surface of head and much of dorsal surface of thorax with definite longitudinal striae. Body hairs fairly abundant, slender, suberect to erect, most of them rather long. Body color ranging from light brown through brown to blackish, the appendages lighter.

Biology and Economic Importance

No comprehensive study has yet been made of the biology of *caespitum* in the United States, although it is a common house and garden pest. Nests are usually constructed in exposed soil, or under the cover of stones, pavement, or other objects, and in rotting wood. The ants also nest in houses, most commonly around or between the lower masonry walls of the foundation. Entomologists are frequently asked to identify refuse from the nests of *caespitum*; it is usually composed of small particles of gravel, seeds, fragments of dead insects, and sometimes fine wood fibers. Colonies are moderately large to large. Winged males and females have been seen every month of the year, most commonly during June and July. Smith, L. B., states that in the Norfolk, Va., area nuptial flights occur between June 20 and July 30. According to Donisthorpe, females are capable of founding colonies unaided by workers. The ants are almost omnivorous and feed on both dead and live insects, honeydew, seeds, the sap of plants, and various household foods such as meats, grease, nuts, potato chips, cheese, honey, and bread, but the ants seem to show a preference for meats or grease. Workers steal seeds from seed beds and girdle, scar, or scarify the roots or stems of tomatoes, cabbages, peppers, eggplants, carrots, beets, radishes, turnips, lettuce, parsley, *Gaillardia*, *Coreopsis*, and *Aster*. Lange has shown that workers of the pavement ant can often cause severe and extensive damage to sugarbeet plants by their attack on the germinating seed, and especially on the primary roots just below the crown. Plants were commonly killed by girdling while the ants were apparently seeking the sap. Workers are also known to gnaw into Irish potato tubers. They tend or foster plant lice and mealybugs, especially subterranean forms. An entomologist once found winged forms of this ant entangling and breaking threads in an acetate rayon-nylon manufacturing plant and soiling the threads. Unverified reports have been made of the ants gnawing holes in a child's rayon underwear and stinging or biting children, causing them to have an allergic rash or a skin reaction.