

angular shoulders. Thorax compressed on each side (best seen from above). Petiolar node, in profile, subrectangular. Body sculpture largely rugulose-reticulate, especially on thorax, petiole, and post-petiole; gaster smooth. Body hairs fairly abundant, slender, suberect to erect, rather long. Body color varying from light brown to reddish brown with a usually much darker gaster.

Biology and Economic Importance

Very little information has been published on the biology of this species. It is known, however, that *guineense* nests in small- to moderate-size colonies in exposed soil or under cover of stones and other objects, in rotting logs and stumps, in the stems of plants, and in the branches or under the bark of trees. The ants also nest in houses and buildings, and were once found in the drawer of an unoccupied desk. The species does not appear to be a house pest of major importance, if we are to judge from the small number of letters received from housekeepers concerning it. Workers are very fond of honeydew, and will tend plant lice and mealybugs. The ants also feed on dead and live insects. As house pests, they are almost omnivorous and feed on fruits, vegetables, meats, and grease.

References: Phillips, 1934, pp. 23-24; Smith, 1936, pp. 851-852; Swezey, 1942, p. 179.

Wasmannia auropunctata (Roger)

Little fire ant. The ESA-approved common name, "little fire ant," is misleading in that "fire ants" belong to the genus *Solenopsis* Westwood, and this species is not a *Solenopsis* or even closely related to it. It is true, however, that *auropunctata*, like species of *Solenopsis*, has a "firelike" sting. This ant, which is of Neotropical origin, has been introduced into several localities in Florida. It occurs in Mexico, Central and South America, and the West Indies.

Taxonomic Characters

Subfamily and generic characters: Workers are monomorphic. Frontal carinae far apart but partly concealing antennal insertions. Antenna 11-segmented. Abdominal pedicel composed of two seg-

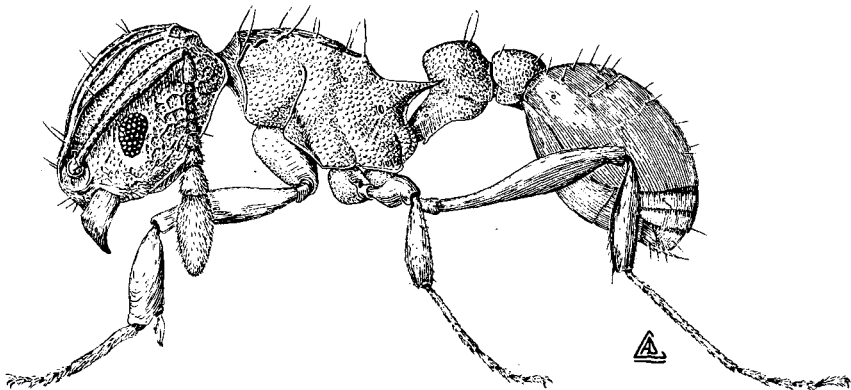


Figure 26.—*Wasmannia auropunctata* (Roger), little fire ant, lateral view of worker.