

secretions. Like many species of ants, the workers feed on both dead and live insects.

T. sessile, one of our more important house infesting ants, is capable of invading houses from outdoors, or nesting inside. Although the ants feed on a wide variety of household foods, such as raw and cooked meats, cooked vegetables, dairy products, fruit juices, and pastries, they appear to show a preference for sweets. Their active habit of crawling over plants in search of honeydew may eventually incriminate them in the transmission of plant diseases.

References: Essig, 1926, pp. 863-864, fig.; Smith, 1928, pp. 307-329, figs.; Metcalf and Flint, 1939, p. 770; Cole, 1940, pp. 14, 30, 63-64; Smith, 1950, pp. 283-284; Kannoński, 1959, pp. 126-129.

Tapinoma melanocephalum (Fabricius)

Although probably of African or Oriental origin, this introduced species has been so widely distributed by commerce that it is impossible to determine its original home. The species is established in a number of localities in southern Florida. In more northern latitudes, *melanocephalum* seems unable to maintain itself, except in greenhouses or perhaps heated buildings.

Taxonomic Characters

Subfamily and generic characters: Same as for *sessile*. *Specific characters:* Workers extremely small, 1.3-1.5 mm. long. Apex of scape distinctly exceeding posterior border of head. Antennae and legs somewhat thickened in appearance. Prothorax compressed laterally and with rather pronounced shoulders. Thorax broadest through anterior part of prothorax. Appendages very pale or milky white in color. Head usually darker than remainder of body, thorax and gaster commonly with light and dark areas of variable size. Dorsum of thorax without erect hairs. This species is readily recognized by its extremely small size and peculiar color markings. *T. melanocephalum* and *Solenopsis molesta* are the smallest ants discussed in this paper.

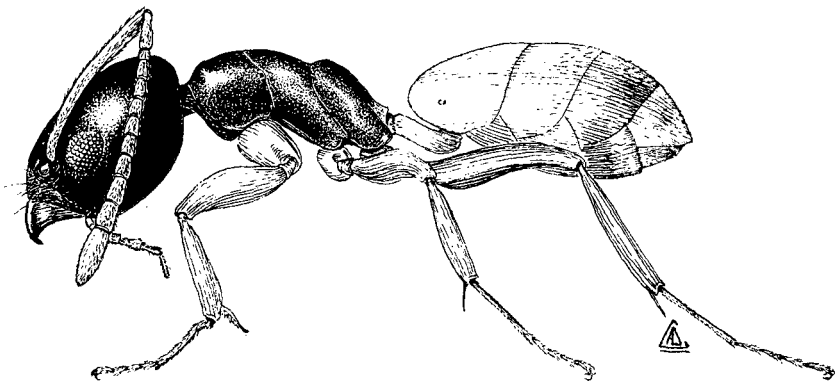


Figure 32.—*Tapinoma melanocephalum* (Fabricius), lateral view of worker.