



Figure 33.—*Camponotus castaneus* (Latreille), lateral view of worker.

hairs except at apex of each of these segments. Pubescence extremely sparse and closely appressed on body, almost lacking. Body distinctly shiny. Color ranging from yellowish to yellowish red, head and gaster commonly darker than thorax.

### Biology and Economic Importance

*C. castaneus* constructs its nests in rotten logs and stumps, in exposed soil, or in the soil under the cover of objects; also in combined log and soil media. Van Pelt states that he found colonies rare in the Blue Ridge Mountains at altitudes between 4,600 and 5,000 feet. Colonies are small to moderate in size, consisting of a few hundred to seldom more than a thousand or so individuals. Data on the formation of colonies are very limited. It appears, however, that a new colony is founded independently by a newly fertilized female, and that there may not be more than one reproductive female per colony. Our records indicate that in the greater Washington, D.C., metropolitan area, males and winged females may be produced during April or May, since these sexed forms have been taken outside of, or away from, their nests from May to mid-June. Most, if not all, the nuptial flights apparently take place at night. In some colonies there is evidence that males and winged females overwinter in the parental nest, and do not make their nuptial flight until the following year. Workers appear very timid or excited when their nest is exposed, dashing madly and rapidly about trying to hide. Like many ants, the workers tend honeydew-excreting insects for the palatable honeydew. Workers also feed on both live and dead insects.

Although *castaneus* frequently infests houses, it is not a species of major importance. Workers are largely crepuscular or nocturnal, invading houses principally after dusk and commonly disappearing before daybreak. Workers usually appear in small numbers in houses, and often show little interest in household foods. Apparently they are fond of sweets, since they have been reported feeding on sugar and angel cake. The author lived in his home for 16 years before *castaneus* workers invaded his kitchen; they remained only a short