

Prenolepis imparis (Say)

A name commonly applied to this species is the "false honey ant." This native species ranges at least from Nebraska to Ontario and south to Texas and Florida.

Taxonomic Characters

Subfamily and generic characters: Monomorphic. Antenna 12-segmented, without a club. Apex of scape surpassing posterior border of head by approximately one-half length of scape. Antennal fossa extremely close to or touching posterior border of clypeus. Eye prominent, convex, placed closer to posterior border of head than to base of mandible. Clypeus subcarinate. Mandible with oblique masticatory border bearing 5 or 6 stout teeth. Maxillary palpus 6-segmented, usually long. Thorax small, slender, divided into two parts by a remarkably strong constriction in the mesonotum, which causes this region to appear subcylindrical. A pair of prominent spiracles occurs dorsally in the constriction. Abdominal pedicel composed of a single segment, the petiole. Cloacal orifice terminal, circular, surrounded by a fringe of hairs (fig. 48,co). Sting lacking. Base of gaster with a strong impression; seen from above, base of gaster meets each side in a decided angle. Integument soft, flexible. *Specific characters:* Workers 2-4 mm. long. Body hairs whitish or pale yellowish, suberect to erect, more abundant on head and gaster than on thorax, apparently longest on gaster. Scape with abundant, fine, oblique hairs or pubescence. Legs with fine, closely appressed pubescence; almost free of suberect or erect hairs except basally. Body smooth and shiny. Body color variable, ranging from pale castaneous to piceous brown or blackish, head and thorax often lighter than gaster. Readily recognized by the characteristic subcylindrical mesonotum, and the smooth, shiny body.

Biology and Economic Importance

This ant normally constructs its nest in the soil, seldom under the cover of stones or other objects. It nests by preference in moist clay or loamy soils in well-shaded locations such as woodlands. Van Pelt has collected occasional colonies in the Blue Ridge Mountains at altitudes of between 3,500 and 5,000 feet. Exteriorly, the nest has a

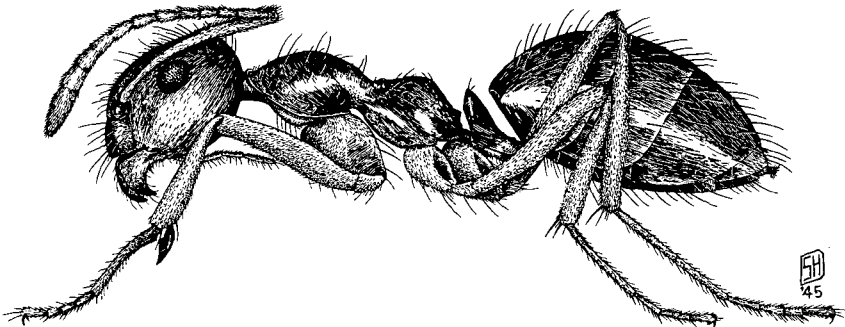


Figure 43.—*Prenolepis imparis* (Say), lateral view of worker.