

single central opening surrounded by a more or less circular crater of characteristic earthen pellets. The nest is usually 18 to 51 inches deep and has a single gallery leading below, from which there extends in linear sequence about 6 to 40 lateral chambers, thus forming a rather compact, well-defined nest. Colonies are rather small, seldom containing over a few thousand individuals. Brood production takes place from middle to late summer, but no brood is overwintered. During the winter an old, characteristic colony will contain a single reproductive female, numerous workers, and males and winged females. In early spring, usually March to April, the overwintering males and winged females make their nuptial flight. Most of the mating, however, appears to take place on the ground. As far as I am aware, this is the first species of the season to make its nuptial flight; it could therefore be considered a harbinger of spring! A new colony is founded by a newly fertilized female, which discards her wings and seeks a crevice in the ground all by herself. Workers forage at night, during cool or cloudy days, or during rains, working at lower temperatures (40° to 65° F.) than any of our other species of ants. In fact, they frequently appear outside the nest when the soil is frozen. Workers are mild-mannered, nonaggressive ants. Few ants exceed *imparis* in their love for honeydew. Workers assiduously tend plant lice, scale insects, and treehoppers, none of which, however, are kept or fostered by *imparis*. Workers often become so engorged with honeydew that their gasters are distended like balloons, and they walk with difficulty. In the possession of a greatly distended gaster, they bear a striking resemblance to our true honey ants, *Myrmecocystus* spp.

They feed on live and dead insects, the juices of well-ripened or decaying fruits, the sap or juice extracted from flower buds, or the tender growth of certain plants, and on the germinating seeds of long leaf pines. Although workers commonly invade houses from outdoors, there is evidence that, in some cases at least, the ants nest inside, since on numerous occasions winged females and males have been collected inside houses from January to March. The ants are incapable of structural damage, but they can be a considerable annoyance to housekeepers. Workers feed on such household foods as sweet corn, corned beef, meats, cakes, breads, sugar, honey, syrup, watermelon, and fruits. The ants seem to be especially fond of sweets, and may be economically important when workers search for honey in weakened beehives. They can damage roses and oranges by gnawing into the flower buds for the sap or juice. Workers have been used by blue jays in "anting" (see Glossary, p. 93). Experimental tests by Smith and Weiss have shown that this ant can transmit azalea flower spot, *Orulmia azalea* Weiss.

*References:* Wheeler, 1930, pp. 1-15; Smith and Weiss, 1942, p. 42; Talbot, 1943, pp. 31-44; Talbot, 1945, pp. 506-507; Hess, 1938, pp. 52-53, 55-57, 59, 63; Van Felt, 1963, p. 213.