

equal in size, the gap between them of about the same area as terminal tooth, constant in shape. Middle of anterior border of clypeal lobe forming an even, broad, parabolic curve. Scape exceeding, by approximately one-fifth its length, the posterior border of head. Eye large, usually with about 16 ommatidia in its greatest diameter. Antennal scapes and tibiae either without suberect or erect hairs, or more commonly with less than 10 each. Body color brown to very dark brown, approaching blackish.

Biology and Economic Importance

L. alienus and *L. neoniger* are similar in many of their habits, but not especially in their habitats. Wilson states that in North America *alienus* has a predilection for well-shaded woodlands, where it nests in rotting logs and stumps and under stones. *L. neoniger*, on the other hand, prefers open habitats (for further details see p. 82). The ranges of the two species frequently overlap in open woods and the borders of forests. Van Pelt has found colonies of *alienus* abundant in the Blue Ridge Mountains at 5,000 feet, common at 6,000 feet, and occasional at 6,100 to 6,500 feet. The individuals composing a nest are moderately, to very, numerous. They are quite similar to *neoniger* in their method of establishing colonies, and in the growth of colonies. Males and winged females occur in nests from midsummer to fall, the nuptial flights usually taking place during August and September. In Europe, a reproductive female was kept in an artificial nest for 9 years (until she died), and during that time she produced a small brood of workers each year. In North America it is quite likely that this common species of *Lasius* is host to one or more temporary ant parasites belonging to *Lasius* (*Chthonolasius*) and *Acanthomyops*. For a discussion of how the parasitism may take place, see the remarks under *L. umbratus* (p. 85).

The feeding habits of *alienus* are almost identical to those of *neoniger*. Like the latter species, the ants eat both dead and live insects, gather nectar from the floral and extrafloral nectaries of plants, tend honeydew-excreting insects, and foster and transport certain subterranean plant lice from the roots of one plant to another. Workers may invade houses from outdoors in their search for food such as sweets and meats. The ants are also capable of nesting in houses, usually in faulty woodwork or masonry of the basement or lower sections. Although they are frequent house pests, the ants are seldom persistent. Individuals are frequently infected with the parasitic fungus *Laboulbenia formicarum* Thaxter, as are those of *neoniger* (see p. 84).

References: Gaige, 1914, pp. 17-19; Donisthorpe, 1927, pp. 242-247; Wilson, 1955, pp. 77-89; Kownowski, 1959, pp. 119-120, 135-136; Van Pelt, 1963, p. 213.

Lasius neoniger Emery

L. neoniger is a native species with a discontinuous distribution. According to Wilson, the main range is from Idaho to Quebec and Ontario, south to Florida, and south through Wyoming, Colorado, and New Mexico. The species also occurs in two small areas in eastern California. It is not known to occur in the Pacific Northwest. In American literature this species has frequently been confused with