

of gaster, whose suberect or erect hairs are usually abundant and well-scattered over entire dorsum. Petiolar node in profile similar to that of *interjectus* in being very narrow and sharp at summit.

### Biology and Economic Importance

One of the most common species in the genus, *Acanthomyops claviger* forms populous colonies in the exposed soil, but more often under the cover of stones or other objects, and in the rotting wood of logs and stumps. The nests are found in such habitats as woodlands (preferably the open type), pastures, and grassy fields. Cole found nests in Utah at an altitude of 10,000 feet, and Van Pelt has found occasional colonies in the Blue Ridge Mountains at altitudes between 3,500 and 5,500 feet. Like other *Acanthomyops*, these ants are largely subterranean and nocturnal. They derive most of their food from honeydew obtained from subterranean plant lice (*Prociphilus*, *Anuraphis*, and other genera) and mealybugs, which they foster on the roots of both wild and domesticated plants. Like all of our *Acanthomyops*, these ants emit a pleasant odor when disturbed; it has been likened to that of lemon verbena or citronella. M. S. Blum *in litt.*, wrote that the worker emits the pleasant odor from the head, and the distinct formic acid odor from the gaster, the latter detectable only when the gaster is crushed. Most of the conclusions concerning the biology of these ants have been drawn from miscellaneous observations. It appears that this species takes its nuptial flights from late August into November, especially during the month of September. One observer noted that during September many square miles of water between Welch's Point and Pond Point, Long Island, were covered with an average of 35 to 50 winged forms per square foot. There is much evidence that males and winged females overwinter in some of the nests, either indoors or out, because these forms frequently "swarm out" during the winter. These emergences during late December and extending into February are not believed to be nuptial flights, but are regarded as swarming because of stimulation by favorable temperature and moisture.

No definite information is available on how new colonies are formed. Quite often wingless, solitary females are found in the soil beneath stones during the winter and early spring. They probably represent fertilized females from the nuptial flights of the previous fall. Wheeler stated that the female of *claviger* is capable of establishing a colony unaided by workers, but there may be other methods of founding colonies. Buren intimates that *claviger* may be a temporary parasite in the nest of some other ant, probably *Lasius neoniger*. *A. claviger* has the same general house-infesting habits as *interjectus*, and a relationship to plant lice and mealybugs similar to that species. Workers have been used by starlings, *Sturnus vulgaris* Linnaeus, and males and winged females by blue jays, *Cyanocitta cristata* (Linnaeus), in "anting."

*References:* Wheeler, 1903, pp. 149-163; Wheeler, 1905b, p. 398; Tanquary, 1911, pp. 294-300; Cole, 1940, pp. 70-72; Cole, 1942, p. 375; Headley, 1943, p. 30; Buren, 1944, p. 298; Groskin, 1947, pp. 69, 72; Van Pelt, 1963, p. 213.