

Cyphomyrmex rimosus Spinola

This species, most widespread of all fungus-growers, is probably of general occurrence in the entire Orinoco basin as well as in all Venezuela. The ants, however, are generally overlooked because of their small size (about 2 mm.), dull brown color and slow-moving habit. When alarmed they "feign death" readily and are then almost impossible to see.

A colony was examined at Barrancas at the head of the Delta, inland from the lagoon west of the village. The ants nested in sandy soil beside the base of a wooden post 85 mm. in diameter and also used tunnels in the post made by termites. The soil chambers were irregular and collapsed in excavating the loose soil. The site was shady and the base of the post was never exposed to more than patches of sunlight up to noon. The ant chambers were on the east side. Several score workers, pupae, larvae and a female were in the portion of the colony collected. A mite was taken in the soil about or in a chamber.

Another colony at Barrancas nested beside a colony of *Acromyrmex octospinosus*. The latter nested in soil close to a rotted stump while the *Cyphomyrmex* nested both in the stump and in a curled up piece of palm or maize leaf buried about 50 mm. in the soil about the *Acromyrmex* nest. Brood was in the dead leaf, as also in chambers in the rotted wood itself. The ants used, as substrate for their fungus, feces of several sizes apparently caterpillar, which were not ribbed as is often the case. The fungus was in the form of small bromatia scattered over the surface of the feces. When the nest was disturbed a small *Pheidole* immediately started to carry off the brood. In the portion of the colony which was collected were 221 workers and much worker brood, specially pupae. Many of the workers were callow as though they were a recent hatch of pupae maturing at about the same time. Since this was the dry season it may well be that during this period workers were produced, while shortly before the rainy season sexual brood may mature. No queen was taken and it is probable that there were several with enough additional workers to bring the adult population to about 300.