

ants.

The tribe Formicoxenini is closely related to the Tetramoriini, but can be separated on the basis of several characters (Bolton, 1982). *Tetramorium* has the lateral portions of the clypeus raised into a narrow ridge or shield-like wall in front of the antennal insertions. *Leptothorax* has that part of the clypeus weakly raised or not raised into a similar wall. *Tetramorium* has maxillary palps with 4 (or rarely 3) segments, whereas *Leptothorax* has 5 segmented maxillary palps. The mandibles of *Tetramorium* usually have 7 teeth, which include 3 large teeth followed by 4 denticles. *Leptothorax* usually has 5 mandibular teeth (4-6) which decrease in size from the apex to the base. Additional characters are listed in Bolton (1982).

The subgenus *Myrafant* can be distinguished by the characters in the key. It can be characterized as having a medial clypeal carina and a relatively short petiolar peduncle.

The shape of the petiolar node appears to be one of the best characters in the subgenus. The shape ranges from a sharp apex to a rounded apex and finally to a truncate apex. The number of antennal segments appears to be of little importance in the phylogeny of this group. Species with 11 segments appear to have independently evolved at least 3 times.

European species are similar to the species in North America, and are apparently closely related. Some species appear to be members of North American species complexes. European members of *Myrafant* include *L. angustulus* (Nylander), *L. fuentei* Santschi, *L. gredosi* Espadaler and Collingwood, *L. grouvellei* Bondroit, *L. interruptus* (Schenck), *L. kraussei* Emery, *L. lichensteini* Bondroit, *L. nadigi* Kutter, *L. niger* Forel, *L. nigriceps* Mayr, *L. nylanderi* (Foerster), *L. parvulus* (Schenck), *L. rabaudi* Bondroit, *L. racovitzai* Bondroit, *L. rottenbergii* (Emery), *L. sordidulus* Müller, *L. specularis* Emery, *L. tuberum* (Fabricius), and *L. unifaciatus* (Latreille).

Biology: Nests are found in the soil, under rocks, and in plant cavities, such as tree and shrub branches and insect galls. A given species is found either always in the soil or always in plant cavities. Nest populations are small, usually fewer than 100 workers. Most species are timid or docile, some species can be surprisingly aggressive, and attack when the nest is disturbed. They are often common, at least in the southwestern United States and México. Little is known of their feeding habits, but limited observations suggest they collect dead arthropods and may even feed on seeds.