

*Leptothorax (Myrafant) obturator* Wheeler

Figs. 43 &amp; 142; Map 34

*Leptothorax obturator* Wheeler, 1903a:249-252, Plate 12, Fig. 19, worker, female, male, Texas, Austin; Wheeler, 1903b:662, gynandromorph; Wheeler and Wheeler, 1955:24 larva; *Leptothorax (Myrafant) obturator*: D. Smith, 1979:1394

Species complex: *obturator*

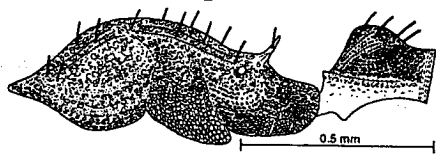


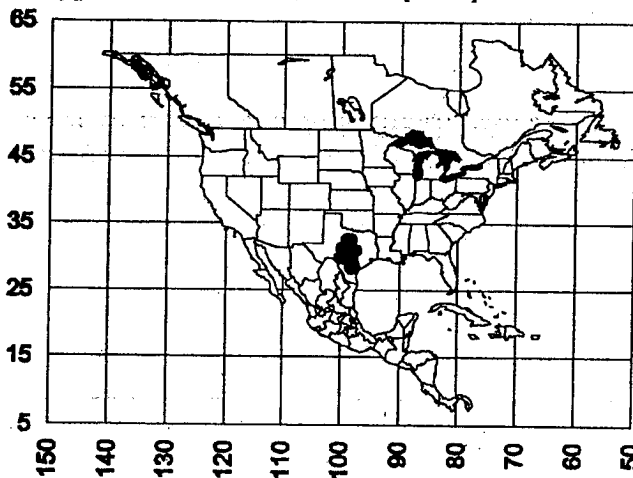
Fig. 142. Mesosoma and petiole of a paratype worker of *Leptothorax obturator*.

**Diagnosis:** The peculiar propodeal spines united by a carina easily distinguish this species from all other known North American *Leptothorax*. The petiolar node is also rounded and poorly defined (Fig. 142), which will also help separate it from other species in the

genus. The propodeum is lower than the mesonotum and appears depressed (Fig. 142). The antenna has 12 segments.

**Distribution:** Central Texas (Bexar Co., Erath Co., Kerr Co., Real Co., Travis Co., Uvalde Co.) (Map 34).

**Type series:** AMNH, MCZC [seen].



Map 34. Distribution of *Leptothorax obturator*.

**Discussion:** This species is easily recognized and would not be confused with any of the other known species in the subgenus, based on two characters: the propodeal spines are closely placed at the base and connected by a carina (Fig. 43) and the propodeum is much lower than the remainder of the mesosoma (Fig. 142).

No other species in

North America has this combination of characters.

**Biology:** Colonies are found in live oak galls (*Quercus virginiana* Mill.) or hollow twigs of the wafer ash and ironwood (Wheeler, 1903a; Moody and Francke, 1982; Longino and Wheeler, 1987; Wheeler and