

were collected in mixed pine-juniper-oak forests. Nests in the Guadalupe Mts. were found in mixed oak-pinyon pine-juniper forests. The soil is a rocky loam, or rocky fine sand. When the nests are disturbed, they primarily attempt to rescue the brood. They are also much more aggressive than the typical *Leptothorax*, attacking and stinging. The sting is surprisingly painful, similar to that of the thief ants in the genera *Solenopsis* or *Wasmannia*. *Liometopum apiculatum* also nests in branches of the oaks, and this *Leptothorax* may be so aggressive as it must protect nests from the former species, which were attempting to prey on the brood of *Leptothorax* during excavation.

### DISCUSSION

The subgenus *Myrafant* of the genus *Leptothorax* is a group of fascinating ants, which are restricted to North America in the New World. Most species are found at lower latitudes at low to moderate elevations. Nesting sites range from soil, to tree and shrub branches, to insect galls. The nest populations are usually small, and these ants

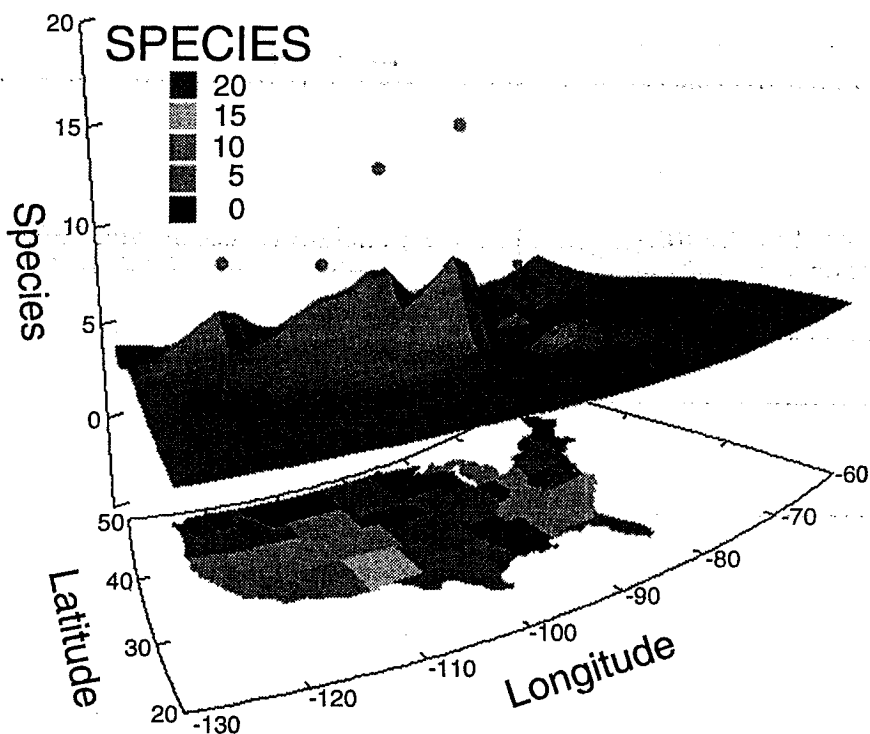


Fig. 191. Distribution of species richness of the subgenus *Myrafant* in the United States.