

are rarely aggressive, although some species attack and sting when the nest is disturbed. Some of the species are social parasites on others. Most species are attractive, with a variety of types of sculpture. Some species are bicolored, and the contrast of a dark head and gaster with a red mesosoma makes an attractive combination. Unfortunately most species of these ants are rarely collected, due to their small size and cryptic habits. We carefully search for these ants whenever we collect, and have amassed a large and diverse collection of species.

There are 56 species found in North America, with many more awaiting discovery, especially in México. This group appears to be most diverse in the southwest of the United States and in México, although this may be an artifact based on our extensive collecting in these areas. Unfortunately little can be concluded about the diversity in México, as much of the country has been little collected. We can map the species richness in the United States, where much material is available. The southwestern part of the United States has the greatest number of species (Fig. 191). There appears to be a transition from California through Arizona, New Mexico and into Texas, which shows a general increase in species richness (Fig. 191). Many of the species in these states range into the mountains of Coahuila and Nuevo León, a pattern which is common in the distribution of North American ants. Apparently the ranges of these species were larger during the mesic late Wisconsin interval (ca. 30,000 to 12,000 before present, see Mackay and Elias, 1992).

Hopefully this review will make it easier to identify these ants, and encourage others to look more closely at this interesting group of ants.

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