

- a group of three on the vertex, present in males and gynes but frequently absent in workers.
- oviposition** The act of depositing eggs.
- Palaearctic Region** The northern regions of the Old World, including Europe, Africa north of the Sahara, and Asia as far south as the southern edge of the Yangtse-kiang watershed and the Himalayas.
- Paleotropical Region** The entire tropical region of the Old World, including the Afrotropical, Malagasy, Oriental, and Indo-Australian tropical regions.
- palp** One of the paired appendages of the maxillary and labial mouth part segments; in ants, the maximum number of maxillary palpal segments is six, the minimum number (rarely seen) is zero; the maximum number of labial palps is four, the minimum number is one.
- panropical** Of or pertaining to the tropical regions of the entire world.
- paraphyletic** Of or pertaining to a taxonomic group that does not include all the descendants of a common ancestor.
- parasitism** A symbiosis in which one partner benefits at the expense of the other.
- paratype** In taxonomy, each specimen of a type series other than the holotype; one of the series of specimens examined during the formulation of the original description of the species.
- parthenogenesis** The development of an individual from a female gamete without fertilization by a male gamete.
- patchiness** Heterogeneity within an environment with respect to ecological conditions of interest (e.g., those that might favor one species over another or that might subdivide populations with regard to gene flow).
- petiole** In ants, the second abdominal segment (i.e., the segment immediately posterior to the alitrunk), which is constricted both anteriorly and posteriorly.
- phylogram** A phylogenetic tree; often used to refer specifically to a phylogenetic tree in which relative branch lengths are specified.
- pilosity** A covering of hair.
- pitfall trap** A steep-sided container sunk into the ground so that the opening is even with the surface, often containing a small amount of liquid preservative; used to trap ground-dwelling animals, which fall in and cannot escape.
- plicae** Folds, wrinkles, or pleats; in the ant proventriculus, the relatively narrow, longitudinal strips of thin, flexible cuticle that connect the broad, sclerotized, cuticular plates of the proventricular bulb.
- polydomy** The condition in which a single ant colony simultaneously has more than one nest.
- polymorphism** In social insects, the condition of having more than one caste within the same sex; in ants, the condition of having workers of distinctly different proportions (e.g., minima and maxima workers or soldiers).
- polyphyletic** Of or pertaining to a taxonomic group that contains members derived from two or more ancestral sources (i.e., that are not part of an immediate line of descent).
- posterad** Toward the posterior; on an insect body, directed toward the rear of the abdomen.
- postpetiole** The modified form of the third abdominal segment (i.e., the segment immediately posterior to the petiole) present in some ant groups, in which this segment is constricted posteriorly to form what is essentially a second petiole.
- predation** The consumption of one animal by another.
- presclerite** In ants, the distinctly differentiated anterior section of an abdominal sclerite, separated from the remainder of the sclerite by a ridge, constriction, or both.
- presternite** In ants, a presclerite derived from a sternite.
- pretergite** In ants, a presclerite derived from a tergite.
- proctodeum** The insect hindgut.
- promesonotum** The fused pronotum and mesonotum.
- pronotum** The dorsal part of the prothorax (thorax segment 1).
- propodeum (epinotum)** In apocritan Hymenoptera, the first abdominal segment, which has become fused with the thorax to form the alitrunk.
- prothorax** The anterior member of the three main subdivisions of the insect thorax, from which the front legs arise.
- proventriculus** In insects generally, the valve separating the crop (anteriorly) and the midgut (posteriorly); in ants, the proventriculus regulates whether food is consumed by the individual (allowed to pass into the midgut) or whether it is retained in the "social stomach" that consists of the combined crops of all colony members.
- queen** See **gyne**.
- relictual** Of or pertaining to persistent remnants of formerly widespread species or higher taxa currently restricted to certain isolated areas or habitats.