Myrmica schenckioides nov. sp., a new socially parasitic ant species (Hymenoptera, Formicidae)

A winged gyne of a new *Myrmica* species was discovered in a roadside verge next to the drift sand Beekhuizerzand, to the east of Harderwijk, Gelderland, The Netherlands. In this paper this species is described. A comparison with resembling species is given. In particular several features of the head make identification easy. We describe the habitat and the ant community in the roadside verge.

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Introduction

Recently, several authors investigated and revised the Palaearctic species of the genus *Myrmica* (e.g. Elmes 1978, Seifert 1988, 2003, Radchenko & Elmes 2003). The genus contains a small group of socially parasitic species, all of which are rare. In this paper we introduce a new socially parasitic *Myrmica* species, found in The Netherlands.

Myrmica schenckioides nova species

Description

Several characteristics of the head distinguish the gyne from other *Myrmica* species. The frons of *M. schenckioides* is narrow (figure 1). The anterior clypeal margin is broadly convex and the medial margin is a little emarginated. The antennal scape is relatively short, with a broad and high flange at the dorsoproximal bend site (figure 2) and does not reach the occipital margin. The propodeal spines are short (figure 3). The postpetiolar node is wide and high (figure 4), with a rounded ventral process (figure 3).

The middle and hind tibiae spurs are comparable to other *Myrmica* species, but they are slender and have relative short dentation.

The sculpture of the entire body is quite coarse. The frons has longitudinal rugae on occiput, and sides with sparse reticulation. The clypeus has longitudinal rugae as well (figure 1). The sides and dorsum of the alitrunk have longitudinal rugae. The petiolar node has lateral rugae, without reticulation and with an anteroventral to caudodorsal orientation (figure 3). The petiolar and postpetiolar nodes are dorsally more or less smooth (figure 4). The head and alitrunk have relative short, straight standing hairs (figure 1). The antennal scape has subdecumbent hairs, which are shorter than the scape width (figure 2). There is no pubescence on the gaster.

Head, dorsal half of the alitrunk and gaster are dark brown. The appendages, nodes and ventral half of the alitrunk are yellowish brown. The antennal scape is even paler. All hairs are thinner than in *M. schencki* and white.

In table 1, several measurements and indices of *M. schenckioides* are compared with the most resembling species: *M. schencki* Viereck, *M. myrmicoxena* Forel, *M. lemasnei* Bernard and *M. karavajevi* (Arnoldi).

Holotype: female. Type locality: Beekhuizerzand, Harderwijk, Gelderland, The Netherlands, 52°20'N 5°40'E. Out of a pitfall, 12.v.2004 - 14.x.2004. The holotype is deposited in the collection of the National Museum of Natural History Naturalis in Leiden.

Taxonomic notes

Within the Palaearctic region, only the members of the *M. schencki*-group (Seifert 2003) and those of the *M. lobicornis*-group (Seifert 1988) have a comparable, characteristic shape of the antennal scape. The members of the *M. lobicornis*-group have a less narrow frons. From the *M. schencki*-group only *M. schencki* and *M. lacustris* Ruzsky have a broad and high flange at the dorsoproximal bend site of the scape. However, these two species differ in four major characters compared to *M. schenckioides*, as illustrated by drawings from a *M. schencki* gyne from the same roadside verge. *Myrmica lacustris* has generally the same characteristics: it possesses longer propodeal spines (figure 5), petiolar and postpetiolar nodes are dorsally strongly rugose instead of almost smooth (figure 6), the maximum length of the hairs on