

Head slightly longer than wide, sometimes as long as wide (CI 93–100). Anterior clypeal margin with distinct median impression. Frontal carinae strongly developed, becoming weaker behind level of eye and ending shortly before posterior margin of head. Antennal scrobe narrow, shallow, and without defined ventral margin. Antennal scape of moderate length, not reaching posterior margin of head (SI 77–84). Eyes small to moderate (OI 21–26), with 9 to 12 ommatidia in longest row. Metanotal groove in profile weakly impressed. Propodeal spines very long (PSLI 32–45), spinose with acute apex. Propodeal lobes small, triangular and acute. Petiolar node strongly squamiform, in dorsal view between 2 and 3 times wider than long (DPeI 219–272) and in lateral view between 2.6 to 3.5 times higher than long (LPeI 28–38). Postpetiole in dorsal view between 1.5 to 2 times wider than long (DPpI 172–202) and much more voluminous than petiole; in profile squamiform but thicker compared to petiole, between 1.6 to 2.1 times higher than long (LPpI 48–60). Mandibles distinctly longitudinally striate. Clypeus usually with 3 to 5 longitudinal rugae, median ruga always more strongly developed and unbroken, while lateral rugae variable in strength and length. Dorsum of head, as well as lateral part ventral to scrobe, longitudinally rugose with widely spaced rugae, usually with 7 to 9 longitudinal rugae between frontal carinae, almost all running unbroken to posterior margin of head. Spaces between rugae with very weak, nearly effaced ground sculpture or completely unsculptured, generally quite shiny. Scrobal area with reduced punctate ground sculpture or completely unsculptured. Mesosoma dorsally and laterally with distinct, mostly longitudinal, widely spaced rugae. Spaces between them and propodeal declivity unsculptured, smooth and shiny. Petiole, postpetiole and gaster completely unsculptured, smooth and shiny. All dorsal surfaces of head, mesosoma, both waist segments and gaster with abundant, long, fine, and simple suberect to erect hairs. Fine pubescence on tibiae and antennal scapes appressed to decumbent. Body uniformly brown, colour varies from light brown to very dark brown, nearly black.

Notes

This species is a common and widely distributed savannah or open area species occurring in Eastern Africa as well as in Southern Africa, generally up north to the Equatorial tropical rain forest belt. As already mentioned above for *T. boltoni*, all the distribution records of *T. weitzackeri* from previous studies have to be treated with caution. It seems that all earlier records from Nigeria, Cameroon, D.R. Congo, Central African Republic, and Uganda have to be assigned now to *T. boltoni* while only the East and Southern African specimens are genuine *T. weitzackeri*. Both species can be found in localities in Angola, Kenya, and Sudan where savannah and rain forest habitats are in close proximity but always separated in their respective habitats.

Tetramorium weitzackeri together with *T. boltoni*, *T. renae*, and *T. snellingi* form a compact core of morphologically related species within the *T. weitzackeri* complex. They can be easily distinguished from *T. bendai*, *T. humbloti*, *T. sepultum*, and *T. tanaense* by the presence of standing hairs on the first gastral tergite, and from *T. guineense* by their absence of a conspicuous reticulate-punctate cephalic ground sculpturation characteristic for the latter. The separation of *T. boltoni* from *T. weitzackeri* is based on morphological differences in the development of the antennal scapes and propodeal spines, biogeography, and habitat preference, and is discussed in detail in the description of *T. boltoni*. Furthermore, *T. weitzackeri* can be simply distinguished from *T. snellingi* because the latter is much smaller in size, possesses much smaller spines, and is distinctly bicoloured, and from *T. renae* since this species is smaller in size and bicoloured, too, and distinctly less sculptured on the mesosoma.

Taking into account that the previous species description of *T. weitzackeri* was unable to discriminate between the latter and *T. boltoni*, *T. renae*, and *T. snellingi*, it was necessary to redefine the description of *T. weitzackeri*. Yet, it has to be mentioned that *T. weitzackeri* is still a relatively variable species but to a much lower degree as previously thought, and always within a species-specific range. For example some populations in South Africa tend to have distinctly shorter hairs than observed in most East African or other Southern African populations. Nevertheless, this is treated as intraspecific variation since it is the only observable difference within these populations and it does not occur consistently enough throughout the entire distribution