

Description

Iridescence between compound eyes and on lateral region of head (between compound eye and insertion of mandible) absent to very weak purple. Pigment colour of mesosoma yellowish red; head the same or slightly darker in colour than mesosoma; coxae and legs similar in colour to mesosoma to heavily infuscated and much darker than mesosoma; petiole dark yellowish red to reddish brown; lateral region of second gastral tergite shiny and with green iridescence. Head pilosity (in full face view) abundant on occipital margin (or rarely absent), and with 4–6 setae near mandibular insertion. Ocelli absent. Ventrolateral pronotum with 2–5 setae. Mesosomal setae pale. Pilosity on first gastral tergite reduced. Anterodorsal region of propodeum arched.

Measurements

Holotype. CI 0.93; EL 0.37; EW 0.22; HL 1.96; HW 1.82; ML 0.89; PnL 0.99; PpL 0.92; REL 0.21; SI 0.88; SL 1.60.

Worker ($n=24$). CI 0.86–0.95; EL 0.34–0.41; EW 0.15–0.24; HL 1.65–2.07; HW 1.44–1.90; ML 0.74–1.00; PnL 0.80–1.04; PpL 0.75–1.00; REL 0.19–0.24; SI 0.87–1.02; SL 1.48–1.71.

Comments

The geographic range of *I. spodipilus* is divided into two apparently allopatric populations separated by the Simpson Desert (Fig. 18). While both populations share the characters used above to diagnose this species, they differ as follows: the western (South Australian) populations are lighter in overall colour with the head and mesosoma being similar yellowish red, while the eastern (New South Wales and Queensland) populations are slightly darker with the head lighter in colour than the mesosoma; additionally, the western populations average slightly larger than the eastern populations [SL 1.49–1.71 v. 1.47–1.62, total mesosoma length (PnL + ML + PpL) 2.42–2.94 v. 2.32–2.84, with a similar trend in most other measurements as well]. Despite these differences, the similarities in erect pilosity colour and gastral appressed pubescence suggest that these populations represent a single species showing geographic variation in colour and size.

Etymology

The specific name, derived from Latin, describes the ash-coloured body setae.

Iridomyrmex variscapus, sp. nov.

(Fig. 9)

Material Examined

Holotype. Worker, Queensland, Sandringham [c. 24°03'S., 139°04'E.], 6.vi.1980, P. J. M. Greenslade (ANIC, type no. 7976).

Paratypes. 11 workers, same data as holotype (ANIC, BMNH, MCZC).

Worker Diagnosis

Eyes large (EL > 0.50 mm, REL > 0.27); mesosoma yellowish red; scapes distinctly bicoloured.

Description

Iridescence between compound eyes weak purple and on lateral region of head (between compound eye and insertion of mandible) absent. Pigment colour of mesosoma yellowish red; coxae, legs and petiole slightly darker, head slightly lighter than mesosoma; lateral region of second gastral tergite shiny and with weak green and purple iridescence. Head pilosity (in full face view) present on occipital margin and with 2–6 setae near mandibular insertion. Ocelli present (anterior ocelli vestigial and reduced to a shallow depression). Ventrolateral pronotum with 2–5 erect setae. Mesosomal setae pale. Pilosity on first gastral tergite reduced. Anterodorsal region of propodeum flat.