

Ant Larvae of the Subfamily Myrmeciinae

(Hymenoptera: Formicidae)

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Emery (1911) and Wheeler (1922) placed the genus *Myrmecia* in the tribe Myrmeciini of the subfamily Ponerinae. Clark (1951) with Brown (1954) concurring raised the tribe to subfamily rank, Myrmeciinae.

The genus *Myrmecia* occurs only in Australia and New Caledonia and comprises between 65 (Brown and Taylor, 1970) and 96 (Clark, 1951) species. The workers range in length from 4 mm to 36 mm. The larger species are called bulldog ants because of "the vicious way they attack and the tenacity with which their huge jaws hang on to their victim. All the workers and females are provided with a large sting with which they inflict a severe and painful wound. A burning sensation accompanied by redness and swelling may be felt at the wound some time afterwards and may last several days" (Clark 1951: 18).

The Myrmeciinae are generally regarded as the most archaic of living ants. Brown (1954: 22-23) divided them into three tribes of one genus each: Prionomyrmecini, *Prionomyrmex* from the Baltic Amber (Oligocene); Nothomyrmeciini, *Nothomyrmecia*, one species (only two specimens known) from Western Australia, which "appears to satisfy nearly all conditions demanded of an ancestral stock leading to the *Dolichoderinae* and *Formicinae*"; and Myrmeciini, *Myrmecia*.

In our previous papers (1952, 1964) we have treated *Myrmecia* as a ponerine. Now we are convinced that it should be in a separate subfamily, the Myrmeciinae. In 1952 we described the larvae of two species (*M. gulosa* and *M. sanguinea*). In this paper we describe the larvae of 28 additional species. For all of this new material we are deeply indebted to the Rev. Bede B. Lowery, Head Master of St. Ignatius School, Norwood, South Australia. Rev. Lowery's gift renders *Myrmecia* the largest genus in our collection except *Camponotus*. Since *Camponotus* is the largest genus of ants (about 600 species), our 60 species constitute only 10%; but our 30 species of *Myrmecia* are either 42% or 31% of the genus.

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