

*M. barbouri*. The reaction of *M. barbouri* to disturbances at the nest was less dramatic than in *M. toro*. Ants often turned to face an intruder without striking, or moved aside to avoid the intruder. In some cases, a worker gripped the intruder in her mandibles, and then carried or dragged it from the nest. Two small scolopendromorph chilipods, a dipluran, and an unidentified fly larva were given this treatment.

Although intruders (such as centipedes, cockroaches and large springtails) were struck by the mandibles of one or two ants, I never observed mass assaults like those described for *M. toro*. As a result the *M. barbouri* ants were slow at driving many intruders from the nest. Unlike *M. toro*, gynes also struck intruders.

## DISCUSSION

Information on the nesting and foraging habits of *Myrmoteras* ants is scarce. FOREL (1893) and WHEELER (1910) assumed that *Myrmoteras* ants are arboreal because of their exceptionally well-developed eyes. F.X. WILLIAMS (in WHEELER, 1922) indicated that *M. williamsi* (subgenus *Myrmoteras*) from the Philippines nests in soil. The observations given here support the view that workers nest and forage on the ground. The ants forage solitarily, using a trap-jaw technique convergent with that of odontomachine and long-mandibulate dacetine ants (MOFFETT, 1985).

W.L. BROWN, Jr. (pers. comm.) collected *M. iriodum* workers (subgenus *Myagroteras*) in S.E. Kalimantan. The ants were in small clusters with brood inside hollow twigs and between leaves in a single 20 m<sup>2</sup> area on the rain forest floor. A single dealate queen along with a few workers and brood were present in one hollow stick. Brown suggests that the colonies could be diffuse, consisting of widely separated groups of workers and brood. However, the *M. toro* and *M. barbouri* colonies I collected apparently had a single nest site. In any case, the limited available evidence suggests that *Myrmoteras* colonies have small worker populations, and that the ants accept a variety of ephemeral nesting sites at ground level.

Disturbances from small arthropods would presumably be frequent for species nesting in relatively exposed sites. When colonies are small, the removal of these intruders must be accomplished so as to minimize the danger to the workers. The defensive strategy of *Myrmoteras* ants (particularly as described for *M. toro*), in which workers ejected intruders from the nest with blows from the mandibles, insures that potentially dangerous intruders are removed without workers having to grapple with them.

Species of *Myrmoteras* in the subgenus *Myagroteras*, such as *M. toro*, lack trigger hairs. This condition is considered ancestral for the genus (MOFFETT, 1985). As demonstrated in the laboratory, *M. toro* ants have a broad diet of small soft-bodied invertebrates. However, *M. toro* workers