

THE ANT LARVAE OF THE MYRMICINE TRIBE PHEIDOLINI

(HYMENOPTERA, FORMICIDAE)¹

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The tribe Pheidolini comprises 18 genera: *Stenamma*, *Sifolinia*, *Aphaenogaster*, *Novomessor*, *Veromessor*, *Messor*, *Gonionmma*, *Oxyopomyrmex*, *Machomyrma*, *Pheidole*, *Ceratopheidole*, *Ischnomyrmex*, *Epipheidole*, *Sympheidole*, *Parapheidole*, *Conothoracoides*, *Gallardomyrma* and *Ancyridris*. It includes harvesting ants (*Messor*, *Veromessor*, *Gonionmma*, *Oxyopomyrmex*, *Pheidole*); species with a strongly polymorphic or dimorphic worker caste (the soldiers with enormous heads) (*Messor*, *Machomyrma*, *Ischnomyrmex*, *Ceratopheidole*, *Pheidole*); and permanent social parasites (*Sympheidole*, *Epipheidole*, *Sifolinia*). There are about 500 species in the tribe, most of which (391 according to the *Genera Insectorum*) are in *Pheidole*, which is, in fact, the second largest genus of ants. "One species, *Pheidole megacephala*, has been carried to all parts of the tropics and has become a great pest in and about dwellings and plantations as it assiduously cultivates coccids on many economic plants and ruthlessly destroys and replaces the native ant-faunas" (Wheeler, Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist. 45: 128. 1922).

In this article we have described the larvae of 22 species representing six genera. References from the literature are cited for 22 additional species, making a total of 44 species considered.

Our pheidoline larvae are a heterogeneous group which we have found difficult to characterize as a tribe. They differ little (as a group) from the Myrmicini but are perhaps somewhat more specialized as to body shape, mandibles, spinules on the mouth parts and body hairs. As with the adults, *Stenamma* is the most primitive genus and *Ischnomyrmex* the most specialized.

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