

in the walls of the excavation. But to follow these passages to their ends was quite another matter. Although some of them were traced to a distance of two feet from the main shaft, no brood chamber or seed chamber was found. Nevertheless, it is possible to state that the nest of *ridicula* is diffuse with the seed and brood chambers widely separated.

The foraging responses of *ridicula* are flexible and this makes them difficult to describe. Much of the foraging occurs at night but it is misleading to characterize *ridicula* as a nocturnal forager. If the nest area is shaded, or if the day is overcast, foraging may occur over a twenty-four hour period. Even when the nest is not shaded foraging ordinarily continues until mid-morning. Foraging may be diffuse or the foragers may form columns. Most of the seeds brought in are picked up from surface litter and in this type of foraging columns rarely form. But when a concentrated food source is at hand, the foragers will converge on it and a column may result. The foragers seldom get far from the nest. In each of the seven colonies most of the foraging was done within ten feet of the nest entrance. The majors take no part in the foraging although they will leave the nest with the minors. When they do so they restrict their patrol to the area around the nest entrance and it is exceptional to find them more than a foot from it. During vigorous foraging there may be several majors outside the nest and their activities effectively clear the area of other ants.

There is little about the appearance of the major of *ridicula* to suggest its lethal behavior. From a structural standpoint Wheeler's choice of name is apt enough, for it would be hard to imagine a more top-heavy ant. But there is nothing ridiculous about the major in action. When it is on guard, either within the nest entrance or outside it, it attacks other ants with such efficiency that the victim usually has no chance to defend itself. The basic features of this attack are the same as those described for the major of *militicida* in 1959 (2). As the *ridicula* major approaches its victim the mandibles are opened to their widest extent. This is followed by a rapid lunge towards the victim during which the mandibles are snapped shut. Unlike the *militicida* major the major of *ridicula* does not hold the antennae close to the head during attack. They are usually held with the scapes at right angles to the long axis of the head and with the funiculi flanking the open mandibles (See Fig. 1). Because of the lateral expansion of the genae the mandibles can be opened to an astonishing extent, with the result that the major of *ridicula* seldom has difficulty getting the head or the thorax of its victim