

## MYRMECIA SIMILLIMA Fred. Smith

- Myrmecia simillima* Fred. Smith, 1858, Cat. Hym. Brit. Mus. 6: 144, *nec* Clark, 1952, p. 89. Crawley, 1926, p. 376, fig. 3.
- Myrmecia crudelis* Fred. Smith, 1858, Cat. Hym. Brit. Mus. 6: 147. Crawley, 1926, p. 374, fig. 1. Clark, 1952, pp. 35-36, fig. 13, worker. NEW SYNONYMY.
- Myrmecia tricolor* Mayr, 1862, Verh. zool.-bot. Ges. Wien 12: 724, worker. NEW SYNONYMY.
- Myrmecia nigriventris* Mayr, 1862, *Ibid.*, pp. 724, 727, worker. NEW SYNONYMY.
- Myrmecia spadicea* Mayr, 1862, *Idem.*, pp. 724, 728, worker (*recte* ergatoid female).
- Myrmecia paucidens* Forel, 1910, Rev. Suisse Zool. 18: 5, worker. NEW SYNONYMY.
- Myrmecia tricolor* var. *rogeri* Emery, 1914, Boll. Lab. Zool. Portici 8: 181, worker. NEW SYNONYMY.

This species has mandibles with dentition similar to that of *M. forceps*, with four or five larger teeth and more or less reduced or vestigial teeth between these, but the external borders are approximately straight for most of their length. Looked at closely, this straightness of the external borders varies from very slightly convex to very slightly concave within unidual series, and a further gross illusion of convexity or concavity is produced by various positions (degrees of closure) in which the dried specimens have the mandibles fixed. Forel's *paucidens*, types of which I have not seen, follows specimens of the red or "*nigriventris*" phase if one considers that Forel probably made his description with the use of a simple hand lens, as he frequently did with large specimens.

The numerous synonyms may be blamed partly on the wide range of color variation shown by the species, and to a lesser extent on the variation in the direction of the pronotal striation. Three color variants may be recognized on a strictly arbitrary basis; the present abundant material available (series from at least 32 nests from 29 localities, mostly numerous in individuals, and including the types of *M. crudelis* and *M. simillima* in the British Museum) shows that these phases are completely intergradient both inter- and intranidally. The intergradation has been recognized, in a rare discussion of color variation, by Clark (1952, p. 45), and also by Wheeler (1933, p. 44). The phases are, roughly: "black," with head, alitrunk and nodes black or brownish-black (*M. rogeri*, types of *M. simillima* and *M. crudelis*);