

Myrmecia rubra Clark, 1952, Formic. Australia, Melbourne, 1: 98, worker; additional synonymy given.

This is the common bull-ant of the higher-rainfall areas of south-eastern Australia; it is most abundant in the Australian Alps at elevations of 1000 feet or more (higher in New South Wales), but is found at sea level in medium-rainfall sclerophyll forest in the Melbourne area and over much of Tasmania. It is sporadically distributed in the Western District of Victoria, including the moister savannah of the Camperdown district (Brown), and is common in the Lofty Ranges of South Australia (Brown). *M. forficata* has been confused by all former authors with several other species, among them *M. pyriformis*, *M. simillima*, *M. brevinoda*, and perhaps others. There is still an open problem concerning its relationship to *M. regularis* Crawley and the enigmatic *M. lucida* Forel. *M. regularis* is a southwestern Australian species with ecological requirements much like those of *M. forficata*; that is, it prefers heavy forest of the wet sclerophyll type. *M. regularis* is (in southwestern Australia) a light-to-medium reddish-brown ant with dark gaster, perhaps averaging a little smaller than the usual series of *forficata* from the Melbourne area; the entire head, alitrunk, and especially the gaster show purplish metallic reflections that become feeble in dried cabinet material and may disappear altogether. The chief distinguishing feature of the worker is supposed to be the coloration of the gaster, in which the posterior segments are broadly banded at their apices with sordid yellowish or reddish; the apical segment is usually entirely yellow. This apical gastric pattern is also found in, and appears to be constant and specific for, some other *Myrmecia* species of different groups (*analis* Mayr, *tarsata* Fr. Smith, *tepperi* Emery, *nigriscapa* Roger) as far as investigation has gone. I am inclined to agree with former authors that it is often a constant and most useful character in the species mentioned, plus some others as well.

The difficulty with this character in the present instance, however, is that it appears in certain series from South Australia, Victoria and the Australian Alps in New South Wales which on other criteria, such as deeper color, would be placed as *forficata*. Forel's description of *lucida*, while ambiguous, may apply to such a form from Tasmania. I found this form to be the dominant night-foraging *Myrmecia* in the wooded ravines at the western end of Kangaroo Island in 1951, but did not attach any special significance to the light-tipped gaster as a