

**ANT LARVAE OF THE MYRMICINE TRIBE ATTINI:
SECOND SUPPLEMENT (HYMENOPTERA: FORMICIDAE)**

GEORGE C. WHEELER and JEANETTE WHEELER

Laboratory of Desert Biology, Desert Research Institute,
University of Nevada System, Reno, Nevada 89507

ABSTRACT—The authors' first supplement on the subfamily Myrmicinae was published in 1960. The present supplement deals only with the fungus-growers and contains descriptions of 3 additional species in *Atta*, *Mycetosoritis* and *Trachymyrmex*. The genus *Mycetosoritis* is characterized here for the first time. Recent references to attine larvae are cited.

Subsequent to the publication of our first supplement on the larvae of the subfamily Myrmicinae (1960a) we have received from other myrmecologists so much additional material that it has become necessary to publish additional supplements.

TRIBE ATTINI

Weber 1966: 592, 594—General remarks similar to 1972 below.

Weber 1972: 39–42—The larva emerges from the egg shell through a hole which it has rasped with its spiny mandibles as it opens and closes its mouth parts. Mouth parts were observed to be working and feeding on the discarded chorion or the mycelium.

“The fungus-growing ants differ from all other ants and all other insects, including the fungus-growing termites, in embedding their brood in the fungus garden, where they are normally covered by the thread-like mycelium.”

The larger larvae are usually embedded, on the back or side, in the garden, with the head capsule protruding. They are incapable of locomotion and must be fed by the workers. By “pouting,” or extruding its mouth parts, the larva notifies the worker that it is hungry; the latter responds by placing a mass of fungus on the mouth parts. The larvae are frequently licked by the workers. Presumably trophallaxis occurs: “the larvae are an integral bond in keeping a colony viable.”

The ventral hairs of attine larvae keep the fungal mass firmly in place while the larva is feeding. The spines on the mandibles puncture the fungal walls.

“The feeding of the larvae is remarkably similar in all attine species. Most of the species culture clusters of inflated hyphae (staphylae) and the use of this compact form of the fungus is particularly efficient.”