

The available biological information suggests that *I. discors* is a general predator/scavenger and occupies a variety of drier habitats, including arid and semi-arid grasslands and shrublands, dry sclerophyll and *Callitris* woodlands. Nests are in soil, often with a low, dispersed layer of loose dirt around the entrance.

Iridomyrmex obscurior Forel stat. nov.
(Figs 1, 2, 8-10)

Iridomyrmex discors obscurior Forel, 1902: 465.

Types. Victoria: 5 worker syntypes from Ballarat (1 worker in ANIC; 4 workers in MHNG).

Other material examined (in ANIC). A.C.T.: Cotter Res., 10 mi (= 16 km) W of Canberra (P. W. Matthews).

Worker diagnosis. Head narrow (CI less than 0.94) (Fig. 1); scapes long (SI greater than or equal to 1.00) (Fig. 2); propodeal dorsum flatter in lateral profile (Fig. 9).

Worker description. Pigment colour of head and mesosoma dark yellowish-red and with the pronotum slightly lighter; petiole and gaster dark reddish-black to black; coxae and legs infuscated dark brown. Iridescence absent to weak blue on gaster. Head with numerous erect setae on occipital and lateral margins. Dorsal surfaces of mesosoma, petiole and gaster with numerous elongate erect or suberect hairs; erect hairs present on all leg surfaces and antennal scapes. Shape of dorsal surface of propodeum low and flattened medially.

Measurements. Worker ($n = 6$): CI 0.91-0.93; EL 0.25-0.27; EW 0.15-0.16; HL 1.19-1.29; HTL 1.41-1.48; H'W 1.10-1.19; ML 0.52-0.57; PnL 0.57-0.67; PpL 0.61-0.66; REL 0.22-0.23; SI 1.00-1.05; SL 1.14-1.19.

Comments. *Iridomyrmex obscurior* is currently known from only two collections, the original specimens described by Forel (1902) and a second collection made recently near Canberra, A.C.T. Specimens from both collections are morphologically similar although the type material is noticeably lighter in colour compared to the A.C.T. specimens. This is presumably caused by fading of the original type specimens. *I. obscurior* is morphologically similar to *I. discors* and was originally described as a subspecies of the latter. The two species differ primarily in the scape length relative to head width, and the shape of the head and dorsal surface of the propodeum. In all known specimens the scape is longer for a given head width in *I. obscurior* than in *I. discors* (Fig. 2). Similarly, the dorsal surface of the propodeum in lateral view in *I. obscurior* is arched anteriorly and posteriorly with the central region nearly flat (Fig. 9), while this surface in *I. discors* is always approximately uniformly arched medially (Figs 5-7) although the anterior region can vary from being arched (Fig. 5) to flat (Fig. 7). Finally, head shape differs between these two species, although

the difference is less than in the above characters and several individuals of *I. discors* have head length and width very similar to some individuals of *I. obscurior* (Fig. 1). For example, an individual of *I. discors* from Wolri, Cooloola National Park, Queensland, has a HW of 1.21 mm and a HL of 1.28 mm. This is very similar to the type of *I. obscurior*, which has a HW of 1.19 mm and a HL of 1.29 mm. However, other members of this same nest series have head dimensions which are more typical of *I. discors*. These individuals have HWs of 1.28 and 1.29 mm and HLs of 1.29 and 1.36 mm, respectively. The likelihood that this similarity is caused by gene flow is small given that the specimens with similar head shapes are allopatric, and therefore these taxa are maintained as valid, distinct species.

The only biological information available for this species is that the A.C.T. specimens were collected attending lycaenid pupae.

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