

Biology and ecology. *Tetramorium bicarinatum* is probably a scavenger like most species of *Tetramorium* and probably has little impact on the local fauna. Although it forms large colonies it is not thought to pose a risk to public health. The body length of workers is about 3–3.5 mm.

Dolichoderinae

Iridomyrmex anceps (Roger, 1863)

Distribution. This species is widely distributed in India and also occurs in Iran (D.M. Lay, pers. comm.). The first records for Arabia were collected from several gardens and buildings in Al Ain.

Biology and ecology. This species favours man-made, mesic environments; however its status as a pest is doubtful. Workers range from 3.5–4.5 mm in body length.

Linepithema humile (Mayr, 1868) (formerly *Iridomyrmex humile*) (Common name: Argentine ant)

Distribution. It is a native of Argentina with a global distribution in temperate climates, especially Mediterranean-type ecosystems. Within the last 30 years it has spread at an enormous rate through Europe, western Australia and California. The first record for Arabia was from Al Ain.

Biology and ecology. Although they neither bite nor sting, these ants are very competitive and represent a major threat to local faunas because they are very efficient predators of invertebrates. They are small, about 2–3 mm long, and unicolonial with many queens and a huge number of nests which are non-aggressive among themselves. They extend their range by forming spreading colonies which act as a large front, with ants forming columns up to a centimetre wide which appear as a continuous, fast-moving stream. They are encouraged by the presence of irrigation. This species is easily recognized by its behaviour and its strong odour when crushed. It is not a serious household pest.

Tapinoma simrothi Krausse, 1911

Distribution. Widely distributed in the Mediterranean where it is one of the most common coastal species. Thought to be spreading but its distribution in Arabia is local. Found in parks in Al Ain and Abu Dhabi.

Biology and ecology. Little is known but this species is neither polydomous nor unicolonial and usually has two to three queens per colony. The body length of workers is about 3–3.5 mm.

Tapinoma melanocephalum (Fabricius, 1793)

Distribution. This is a globally distributed species in warm climate countries. It is a well established pest in some Arabian towns and has frequently been recorded from Oman (Collingwood & Agosti, 1996).

Biology and ecology. This ant is very small, about 1.5 mm long, and is almost invisible apart from its head which is seen as a black, fast moving dot. Sometimes it forms wide, loose columns on walls. It can be very abundant and often infests houses, where it