

L. niger/*L. platythorax* pair may become a model subject in ecological studies of the development of ant communities in relation to habitat succession.

Below a simplified version of a key is given for distinguishing the species under discussion. It is based on the main diagnostic characters arranged according to their significance for determination (AL – alitrunk length; AH – alitrunk height).

Lasius niger

Workers:

1. Clypeus with very dense and short pubescence; distance between depressed hairs 3.5–4 times shorter than hair length (Fig. 1).
2. Outstanding hairs on the antennal scape relatively sparse and short, the longest hairs not longer (usually shorter) than half of maximum width of scape at its apex (Fig. 2).
3. Mesopropodeal impression usually relatively deep and abrupt, propodeal dorsum usually convex and rounded (Fig. 3).
4. Outstanding hairs on the body relatively sparse and short (Fig. 3).

Females:

– Alitrunk convex, relatively high and short (AL:AH < 1.70) (Fig. 4).

Lasius platythorax

Workers:

1. Clypeus with sparse and relatively long pubescence; distance between depressed hairs 2.5–3 times shorter than hair length (Fig. 5).
2. Outstanding hairs on the antennal scape relatively abundant and long, the longest hairs distinctly longer than half of maximum width of scape at its apex (Fig. 6).
3. Mesopropodeal impression usually shallow, propodeal dorsum somewhat flattened, propodeal dorsum more conical than rounded (Fig. 7).
4. Outstanding hairs on the body relatively dense and long (Fig. 7).

Females:

– Alitrunk weakly convex or somewhat flattened, relatively low and long (AL:AH > 1.75) (Fig. 8).

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