

***Discothyrea sringerensis* (Hymenoptera: Formicidae) a new ant species from India**

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Abstract

Discothyrea sringerensis sp. nov. is described and is the first record of this genus from South India. The other known species of *Discothyrea* are scattered within the tropics and the temperate zones of the world. Based on workers, *D. sringerensis* is most similar to the species described from Malaysia and Australia characterised by 10-segmented antennae.

Key words: *Discothyrea*, Proceratiinae, Formicidae, Western Ghats, India

Introduction

The range of *Discothyrea* lies predominantly within the tropics and warm temperate parts of the Southern Hemisphere (Brown 1958; Bolton 1995; Kubota & Terayama 1999). The only known species from India is *Discothyrea stumperi* from Meghalaya (de Andrade 1998). Baroni Urbani (1977), after examining specimens collected by myrmecologists after an expedition to South India and Sri Lanka, mentions no encounter of *Discothyrea* from these regions.

Discothyrea are small rare ants mostly encountered in the litter where they are thought to be specialist predators on arthropod eggs. Due to its small size, inconspicuous nests, death-feigning habits and cryptobiotic tendencies, *Discothyrea* is relatively rarely collected and little is known of its habits (Brown 1958).

The species described here is the first report of this genus from the Western Ghats. The new species shows close affinity to the Malaysian species *Discothyrea bryanti* Wheeler and to the Australian species *Discothyrea velutina* Wheeler, both characterised by 10-segmented antennae.