

Review of the *Camponotus aureopilus* species-group (Hymenoptera, Formicidae), including a second *Camponotus* with a metapleural gland

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Abstract

The *Camponotus aureopilus* species-group is defined for the first time and revised at species level. The group contains nine known species: *aureopilus* Viehmeyer (with its new junior synonym, *velutinus* Stitz), *cyrtomyrmodes* Donisthorpe, *densopilus* new species, *flavocrines* Donisthorpe, *mussolinii* Donisthorpe, *posteropilus* new species, *subpilus* new species, *thadeus* new species and *xanthopilus* new species. All species are limited to Papua New Guinea except for *thadeus*, which is found in Queensland, Australia. The distinctive species *C. thadeus* is only the second in this large and widespread genus to possess a metapleural gland.

Key words: Taxonomy, Hymenoptera, Formicidae, *Camponotus*, metapleural gland, Australia, Papua New Guinea

Introduction

Camponotus is the world's largest and most widespread ant genus. It contains over 1500 described species and subspecies (Bolton 1995) and occurs in essentially all terrestrial habitats where ants are found. Individual species range in size from moderately small to large, and from highly abundant and visible to rare and cryptic. The genus is certainly one of nature's great success stories.

The species examined here form a small group of distinctive species limited to Papua New Guinea and neighboring Queensland, Australia. They share a number of characters (see below) suggesting a close relationship, and one of them (*C. thadeus*, new species) is only the second species in the genus with a metapleural gland. This gland, one of the autapomorphies uniting the family Formicidae, has been lost in a handful of genera (Bolton 2003) including all but two known species of *Camponotus* (*C. gigas* and *C. thadeus*). While *C. gigas* is morphologically unusual for the genus (and is currently placed in the