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Description of a remarkable new species of ant in the genus *Daceton* Perty (Formicidae: Dacetini) from South America

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Abstract

A remarkable new species in the ant genus *Daceton,* which has remained monotypic for 205 years, is described from Brazil and Peru. The new species, *Daceton boltoni* sp. nov., is similar to its sister species, *D. armigerum,* but differs from it mainly in the form of the pronotal lateral spines and in the pilosity of the first gastral segment. The taxonomic history and biology of the genus is reviewed.

Key words: Ants, Brazil, *Daceton armigerum*, *D. boltoni*, Myrmicinae, Peru

Resumen

Una nueva especie de hormiga en el género *Daceton,* el cual ha permanecido monotípico por 205 años, se describe de Brasil y Perú. La nueva specie, *Daceton boltoni* sp. nov., es similar a *D. armigerum*, pero difiere de ésta, principalmente, en la forma de las espinas pronotales y en la pilosidad en el dorso del primer segmento del gaster. Una revisión de la historia taxonómica y biología del género es presentada.

Palabras clave: Brasil, *Daceton armigerum*, *D. boltoni*, hormigas, Myrmicinae, Perú

Introduction

The monotypic ant genus *Daceton* Perty (Myrmicinae: Dacetini), and its hitherto known sole species *D. armigerum* (Latreille), is restricted to South American rainforests (Kempf 1972, Fernández & Sendoya 2004, Bolton *et. al.* 2007). In this region, *Daceton* and the larger species of the genus *Cephalotes* Latreille are arguably the most morphologically striking arboreal ants. *Daceton* usually nests in cavities in the branches and trunks of trees previously bored by beetles and other insects. Blum and Portocarrero (1966) and Moffet and Tobin (1991) state that colonies of *D. armigerum* contain up to 2500 individuals, whereas Wilson (1962) and Hölldobler & Wilson (1990) estimate that colonies contain between 5000 to 10000 workers. *Daceton armigerum* has a complex continuously polymorphic caste system, in which smaller workers nurse the brood and larger workers hunt, dismember prey items, and defend the nest (Wilson 1962; Oster & Wilson 1978; Hölldobler & Wilson 1990). Wilson (1962) reports that workers of this highly predaceous myrmicine ant hunt

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