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## **A taxonomic revision of the southern African species of dauber bees in the genus *Megachile* Latreille (Apoidea: Megachilidae)**

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## Table of contents

Abstract	4
Introduction	4
Species recognition and diagnosis	5
Materials and methods	5
Abbreviations and acknowledgements	6
Diagnostic features	7
<i>Megachile</i> ( <i>Gronoceras</i> ) Cockerell	7
Identification key to the species in the subgenus <i>Gronoceras</i>	9
<i>Megachile bombiformis</i> Gerstaecker	9
<i>Megachile cincta</i> (Fabricius)	13
<i>Megachile felina</i> Gerstaecker	19
<i>Megachile</i> ( <i>Maximegachile</i> ) Guiglia and Pasteels	24
<i>Megachile maxillosa</i> Guérin-Méneville	26
<i>Megachile</i> ( <i>Callomegachile</i> ) Michener	30
Identification key to the species in the subgenus <i>Callomegachile</i>	32
<i>Megachile rufipennis</i> (Fabricius)	32
<i>Megachile rufiventris</i> Guérin-Méneville	35
<i>Megachile demeter</i> (Cockerell)	39
<i>Megachile kamerunensis</i> Friese	41
<i>Megachile montibia</i> Strand	44
<i>Megachile anomomaculata</i> (Pasteels)	44
<i>Megachile sheppardi</i> (Pasteels)	46
<i>Megachile soutpansbergensis</i> sp.n.	48
Unidentifiable species in the subgenus <i>Callomegachile</i>	51
<i>Megachile flavipennis</i> Smith	51
<i>Megachile chrysorrhoea</i> var. <i>perimelaena</i> Cockerell	51
<i>Megachile</i> ( <i>Chalicodoma</i> ) Lepeletier	51
Identification key to the species in the subgenus <i>Chalicodoma</i>	52
<i>Megachile karoensis</i> Brauns	52
<i>Megachile murina</i> Friese	57
<i>Megachile niveofasciata</i> Friese	60
<i>Megachile willowmorensis</i> Brauns	65
<i>Megachile gessorum</i> sp.n.	69
<i>Megachile fulvohirta</i> Friese	72
<i>Megachile sarahae</i> sp.n.	73
<i>Megachile richtersveldensis</i> sp.n.	75
<i>Megachile</i> ( <i>Pseudomegachile</i> ) Friese	76
Identification key to the species in the subgenus <i>Pseudomegachile</i>	76
<i>Megachile schulthessi</i> Friese	77
<i>Megachile cradockensis</i> Friese	81
<i>Megachile fervida</i> (Smith)	82
<i>Megachile nasicornis</i> Friese	87
<i>Megachile atripes</i> Friese	90
<i>Megachile louisae</i> Brauns	92
<i>Megachile namibensis</i> sp.n.	94
<i>Megachile fulva</i> Smith	96
<i>Megachile mossambica</i> Gribodo	100
<i>Megachile marshalli</i> Friese	103
<i>Megachile serraticauda</i> Cockerell	107
<i>Megachile neavei</i> Vachal	109
<i>Megachile taraxis</i> sp.n.	111
<i>Megachile pseudotaraxis</i> sp.n.	113
<i>Megachile sinuata</i> Friese	114
<i>Megachile gessi</i> sp.n.	119
<i>Megachile leucospila</i> Cockerell	120
Species of uncertain identity or incorrect records for southern Africa	121
<i>Megachile edentata</i> Friese	121
<i>Megachile edwardsiana</i> Friese	122
<i>Megachile fuliginosa</i> Friese	122
<i>Megachile imitata</i> Smith	122
<i>Megachile natansiella</i> Cockerell	122
<i>Megachile pallida</i> Radoszkowski	123
<i>Megachile trapezicauda</i> Pasteels	123
Conclusions and future directions	123
Food plants	123
References	125
Index	128
Gazeteer	131

## Abstract

The five dauber subgenera of *Megachile* that occur in southern Africa are revised. They are: *Gronoceras*, *Maximegachile*, *Callomegachile*, *Chalicodoma* and *Pseudomegachile*. This group comprises 43 valid species, nine of which are new to science. They are: *Megachile* (*Callomegachile*) *soutpansbergensis* sp.n., *Megachile* (*Chalicodoma*) *gessorum* sp.n., *Megachile* (*Chalicodoma*) *sarahae* sp.n., *Megachile* (*Chalicodoma*) *richtersveldensis* sp.n., *Megachile* (*Pseudomegachile*) *gessi* sp.n., *Megachile* (*Pseudomegachile*) *namibensis* sp.n., *Megachile* (*Pseudomegachile*) *pseudotaraxis* sp.n., *Megachile* (*Pseudomegachile*) *taraxis* sp.n. and *Megachile* (*Pseudomegachile*) *pseudotaraxis* sp.n. Thirty-four new synonymyms have been recorded. *Megachile simpsoni* race *yapiensis* Cockerell is a junior synonym of *Megachile bombiformis* Gerstaecker; *Megachile combusta* Smith, *Megachile nigrocincta* Ritsema and *Megachile tricolor* Friese are synonyms of *Megachile cincta* (Fabricius); *Megachile cerberus* var. *optima* Cockerell is a synonym of *Megachile felina* Gerstaecker; *Megachile chrysorrhoea* Gerstaecker is a synonym of *Megachile rufipennis* (Fabricius); *Megachile pernicioso* Friese, *Megachile pernicioso* var. *pallipennis* Friese and *Megachile aridissima* Cockerell are synonyms of *Megachile rufiventris* Guérin-Méneville; *Megachile excavata* Cockerell is a synonym of *Megachile demeter* (Cockerell); *Megachile kamerunensis totafusca* Pasteels is a synonym of *Megachile kamerunensis* Friese; *Megachile tritacantha* Pasteels is a synonym of *Megachile sheppardi* (Pasteels); *Megachile musculus* Friese, *Megachile johannis* Pasteels, *Megachile biexcisa* Pasteels and *Megachile johannis fulvosetosa* Pasteels are synonyms of *Megachile karoensis* Brauns; *Megachile insolita* Pasteels, *Megachile reicherti* Brauns, *Megachile acanthura* Cockerell, *Megachile bipunctulata* Pasteels and *Megachile aurulenta* Pasteels are synonyms of *Megachile murina* Friese; *Megachile cinctiventris* Friese, *Megachile albopilosa* Friese and *Megachile lineofasciata* Pasteels are synonyms of *Megachile niveofasciata* Friese; *Megachile congruens* Friese and *Megachile flaviventris* Friese are synonyms of *Megachile schulthessi* Friese; *Megachile empeyi* Pasteels is a synonym of *Megachile cradockensis* Friese; *Megachile torridus* Smith, *Megachile decemsignata* Radoszkowski and *Megachile junodi* Friese are synonyms of *Megachile fervida* (Smith); *Megachile bullata* Friese and *Megachile trisecta* Pasteels are synonyms of *Megachile nasicornis* Friese; *Megachile laminata* Friese and *Megachile armatipes* Friese are synonyms of *Megachile mossambica* Gribodo. The nomenclatorial history of each species is documented, descriptions are given, food plants are recorded and distribution maps are provided. A key to the included subgenera and keys to the species in each subgenus are given.

**Key words:** bee, pollinator, Afrotropical, *Gronoceras*, *Maximegachile*, *Callomegachile*, *Chalicodoma* and *Pseudomegachile*

## Introduction

The pollen collecting Megachilini (Megachilidae, Megachilinae) are abundant, diverse and speciose. The first major revision (Pasteels 1965) of this group recognized three distinct genera, *Chalicodoma* Lapeletier, *Megachile* Latreille and *Creighonella* Cockerell. Michener (2000), however, placed them all into the nominative genus, which he divided into a number of subgenera. Several of these subgenera use mud in the construction of their nests. They are called daubers. The others mostly use leaves and plant petals, and are known as leaf-cutters. The daubers are morphologically distinct in that the mandibles of the females do not have recessed cutting edges. They are apparently important, as pollinators, for both agriculture and biodiversity conservation, as they are frequently collected visiting plants. However, a number of the daubers are large and conspicuous, which creates awareness of bee, and pollinator, diversity and a need for the identification of these bees. The work of Pasteels (1965) is difficult to use and is inaccurate in many places. It also uses outdated species concepts, mostly recognized based upon color differences and with a limited knowledge of their distribution and variation. Therefore this article is a necessary contribution to our understanding of, and ability to identify the southern African bee fauna.

According to Pasteels (1965) *Chalicodoma* had 13 subgenera. Michener (2000) had five Afrotropical subgenera of *Megachile* that are daubers. They are: *Callomegachile* Michener (8 species), *Chalicodoma* Lapeletier (6 species), *Gronoceras* Cockerell (3 species), *Heriadopsis* Cockerell (1 species), *Maximegachile* Guiglia & Pasteels (1 species) and *Pseudomegachile* Friese (13 species). There are 47 species of megachilid daubers in southern Africa. They all have two submarginal cells in the forewing, the labrum is longer than broad, they do not have an arolium between the pretarsal claws (except *Heriadopsis* that has an arolium on the fore and middle legs) and the pterostigma in the forewing is longer than wide; females have the scopa under the metasoma (none are cleptoparasitic) and males have the seventh metasomal tergum curled under the metasoma (mostly not visible from above). Although the existing classification is not fully agreed here, it is prudent to await the results of a detailed study of the genus by Victor Gonzalez, and tentative changes have therefore not been proposed.