

First Report of Pheidole moerens in Florida  
(Hymenoptera: Formicidae)

Daniel P. Wojcik <sup>1/</sup>, W.A. Banks <sup>1/</sup>, and W.F. Buren <sup>2/</sup>,

Pheidole moerens Wheeler, described from Puerto Rico (Wheeler, 1908), is one of the commoner species of Pheidole in Puerto Rico, but Culebra is the only other West Indian Island that it has been reported from (Smith, 1936). We recently (June 1975) collected this species in Mobile, Alabama, confirming Smith's 1967 report.

In a current survey to determine the effects of the red imported fire ant, Solenopsis invicta Buren, on native ant species, P. moerens was collected in Gainesville, Florida. This survey is conducted bimonthly by placing 2 baits (ground beef and honey (40 percent) in agar) on separate squares of heavy aluminum foil, 1-3 feet apart at each of 100 baiting sites. P. moerens was collected on one or both of the baits 7 times at 5 widely scattered sites in January, May, and November 1973 and in July 1974. With its first collection, P. moerens was recognized to be different from P. floridana Emery (a similar species, commonly found in Gainesville). One of us (W.F.B.) compared Gainesville specimens with the types of P. moerens at the Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University, and found them to be conspecific.

In P. moerens, the prothorax of the majors is transversely rugulose; the head of the minors is densely granulose with longitudinal rugulae on the anterior half, and the postpetiole is globular and not more than 1.5 times the width of the petiole. P. floridana differs because the prothorax of the majors is densely covered with granulose sculpture without transverse rugulae; the head of the minors is densely granulose without longitudinal rugulae on the anterior half, and the postpetiole is pyriform and twice as wide as the petiole.

#### References

- Smith, M.R. 1936. The ants of Puerto Rico. J. Agr. Univ. Puerto Rico 20:819-75.
- Smith, M.R. 1967. Formicidae. In K.V. Krombein and B.D. Burks, eds., Hymenoptera of America North of Mexico, Synoptic Catalog, USDA, Agr. Monog. 2 (Suppl. 2):343-374.
- Wheeler, W.M. 1908. The ants of Porto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Bull. Am. Mus. Nat. Hist. 24:117-58.

<sup>1/</sup> USDA, ARS, Insects Affecting Man Research Laboratory, P.O. Box 14565, Gainesville, FL 32604.

<sup>2/</sup> Department of Entomology and Nematology, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611.

U.S. Dept. Agr.  
Coop. Econ. Ins. Rpt.  
25(49-52):906, 1975