



Ants – Hymenoptera: Formicidae

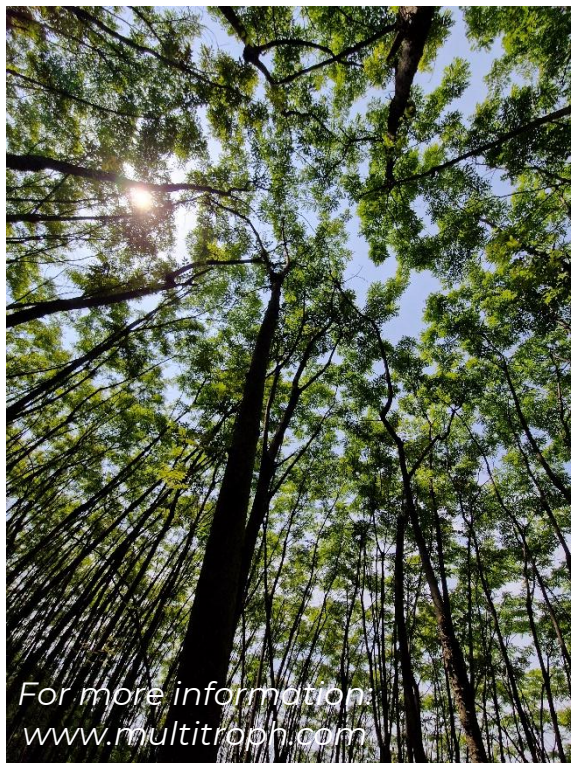
Ants are dominant arthropods of the forest. Members of this family in the order Hymenoptera are active from the forest floor up to the canopy. Although ants are all considered highly social insects, they exhibit a wide variety of lifestyles. Their colonies range from under 100 individuals up to way beyond 100,000. Some species colonize tiny spaces such as an acorn, while others build large soil mounds. Turn the page to get insights into the exciting lives of the ground-living ants of Xingangshan, where we currently count about 160 species.



Tetramorium wroughtonii constructs spectacular soil mounds

BEF China

Spanning 50 ha with over 300,000 planted trees, BEF-China is the world's largest biodiversity-ecosystem functioning (BEF) experiment. It is located near Xingangshan, Dexing, Jiangxi Province in southeast China. MultiTroph is a collaborative project uniting researchers from China and Germany to explore how, why and when species loss impacts ecosystem stability across trophic levels.



For more information:
www.multitroph.com

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The great diversity of Xingangshan



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Have you ever spotted a long column of ants?

Aenictus fuchuanensis is blind, but it is a fierce predator of other ant species. On its raids, it enters their nests to carry away brood and pupae.

If you look closely, you will see other ants trying to evacuate their nests close to the column of *Aenictus fuchuanensis* workers.

If a raid of *Aenictus* spp. is on its way, other insects are often there to profit as well, such as blow flies (Calliphoridae). The blow fly (*Bengalia* spp.) in the picture prepares to ambush evacuating ants to prey on their brood.



Below, *Pristomyrmex punctatus* workers are moving their own pupae. This species nests in bivouacs, which means that the whole colony relocates during its life span.



Aenictus fuchuanensis workers during a raid. All images in this leaflet © Joshua Spitz unless otherwise noted.

Fierce hunters



Wolf spiders (Lycosidae) better remain hidden when foragers of the *Pheidole nodus* group are present.

Efficient foragers



A drop of nutritious wood rot (left) or an insect corpse (right) will be immediately exploited. This is the moment to observe fast running ants from the genus *Nylanderia*.