

Social Insects

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Archaic foundation in two ant species of the genus *Polyrhachis*
(Hym., Formicidae, Formicinae)

A. LENOIR and A. DEJEAN

Laboratoire d'Ethologie et Sociobiologie, URA CNRS 667, Université Paris Nord,
F-93430 Villetaneuse

P. laboriosa and *P. militaris* are two arboricolous Formicinae ant species frequently found in the equatorial forest of Cameroon. *P. laboriosa* lives in the limits of the forest on arborescent shrubs. *P. militaris* inhabits on the top of high trees in the canopy. Isolated queens of these two species can be frequently observed patrolling on the leaves. It was verified in the field and in the laboratory that foundation is haplometrotic in these two species (budding seems also to be possible). Founding queens leave their nest to forage and retrieve food for their first brood. They collect water, sugared juices and they capture prey. They are also observed grazing the leaves probably to collect honeydew of aphids. The *P. laboriosa* queens also collect vegetal particles to build their founding chamber under the leaves. The prey capture behaviour by the queens is similar in the two species. Such an archaic foundation is described for the first time in the Formicinae.