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MYRMECINA GRAMINICOLA (LATR., 1802) (HYMENOPTERA, FORMICIDAE) IN MADEIRA

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SUMMARY. Two males of *Myrmecina graminicola* (LATR., 1802) were found at Portela, Madeira. This ant is to be added to the fifteen ant taxa known from Madeira, that is the southernmost locality for this species.

SUMÁRIO. Dois machos de *Myrmecina graminicola* foram encontrados na Portela, Madeira. Esta espécie de formiga é acrescentada aos quinze taxa de formigas conhecidas para a Madeira, que é a localidade mais meridional para esta espécie.

Only fifteen ant taxa are known to occur on the archipelago of Madeira (WHEELER, 1927; WELLENIUS, 1949); the small number of ant species on oceanic islands is a well known phenomenon (TAYLOR & WILSON, 1961; WILSON, 1973; HEINZE, 1986); any addition to the checklist is worth mention.

During a short visit to the Island, one of the authors (M.B.) got two males of a genus never reported for the archipelago: *Myrmecina graminicola* (LATREILLE, 1802). Both males were captured by sweeping vegetation at 16 hrs at a partially cultivated field near a laurel forest at Portela, Madeira, the 27 August, 1989.

This is the southernmost locality for the species. *Myrmecina* CURTIS, 1829 has its center of distribution in the Oriental region (EMERY, 1921; MANN, 1919, 1921; BROWN, 1973; ONOYAMA, 1980) with a single Australian species (TAYLOR & BROWN, 1985). The small *graminicola* group reaches Eurasia, North-America (BROWN, 1967; BERNARD, 1968) and Mediterranean Africa (CAGNIANT, 1973). The genus seems to be absent from the Ethiopian region (BOLTON, 1973). Some 35 taxa have been described; the comments of BERNARD (1968) about two hundred species seem without fundament. The genus has never been subjected to a formal revision.

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Myrmecina graminicola (LATR., 1802) and *M. sicula* (ANDRÉ, 1882) are the two single european species but this last taxon, a sicilian endemism, is probably a synonym (MENOZZI, 1936; BARONI URBANI, 1964). Typical biotopes for *M. graminicola* are humid places with a developed layer of humus. The nest is hypogaeous but occasionally workers can be seen foraging among dead leaves (pers. obs.). Feeding habits seem to be variable: in northern Europe it is a scavenging ant (COLLINGWOOD, 1979) and does not maintain nest aphids; according to BERNARD (1968) it is nectarivorous and can have nest aphids; dead or live animal food, specially insects, is the preferred regime as stated by DONISTHORPE (1927) but accepts also honey. FOREL (1920) also observed some workers taking honey in a lab nest and mentions a single worker licking a decaying cat carcass. Swarming takes place from August to October in North Europe (COLLINGWOOD, 1979), from August to September in Switzerland (KUTTER, 1977) and Spain (pers. obs., X.E.). No data are known for North Africa.

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