

Discover the Fauna of Our Campus

Acrobat ants

Order: Hymenoptera

Family: Formicidae (Ants)

Subfamily: Myrmicinae

Genus: *Crematogaster* (Acrobat ants)

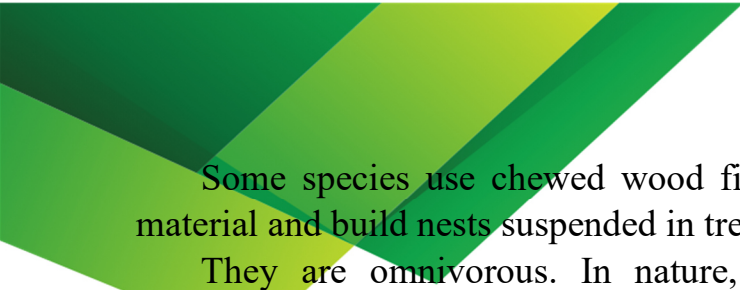
Acrobat body structure and interesting behaviors they display in times of



danger. Various species of this genus are found in Azerbaijan. There is a very simple and visual reason for giving these ants the name “acrobat”: When they feel threatened or anxious, they raise their abdomens (back parts) above their heads. This action is used both to scare off an opponent and to secrete a defensive fluid (pheromone) from the glands at the end of the abdomen. When viewed from a distance, this action resembles an acrobat’s circus act. Worker ants are usually small (approximately 2.5 – 4 mm). Their

most distinctive feature is their heart-shaped abdomens. When viewed from above, the abdomen appears heart-shaped.

Depending on the species, they can vary from light brown to black. Some have a reddish head and thorax, and a black back. Acrobat ants are known for their “architectural” skills in nature. They mainly like to build nests in rotten tree trunks, under tree bark, or in cavities. If they enter a house, they usually choose damp wooden structures (window frames, boards under the roof). Sometimes they can also damage the insulation of electrical wires.



Some species use chewed wood fibers and soil to make a “cardboard”-like material and build nests suspended in tree branches.

They are omnivorous. In nature, they feed mostly on the sweet liquid (“honeydew”) secreted by ants (small insects on plants). They hunt other small insects or carry their carcasses to the nest. When they enter the house, they show a great interest in sweets, meat products, and fatty foods.

In nature, they accelerate the decomposition process of dead wood and regulate the population by feeding on harmful insects. Although they do not directly damage wooden structures as much as “termites”, they accelerate the process by digging up damp rotted wood. To get rid of acrobat ants in the house, you must first eliminate the source of moisture (such as leaking pipes or rotten wood). They do not last long in a damp environment. Acrobat ants can be very aggressive. If you touch their nest, they will immediately attack en masse, assuming an “acrobatic” pose. Although they can bite humans, their venom is very weak and usually only causes a mild itch.

