Identification key of the ants of

Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao

worker caste

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It is intended that this key will be updated regularly.

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The ants mentioned in this key are the result of the identification of samples collected between 1930 and 1970 by HJ MacGillavry, P Wagenaar Hummelinck and RH Cobben (all in the collection of Naturalis Biodiversity Center, Leiden, Netherland), by the author in 2020 on Aruba, by JK Wetterer in 2004, 2005, 2007, 2008 and 2011, a biological expedition organized by the Dutch National Biodiversity Centre Naturalis and Stichting Nationale Parken (STINAPA) on Bonaire, supplemented with a few literature references.

All identifications (except data from literature) are done by the author, except a part of the collection of JK Wetterer.

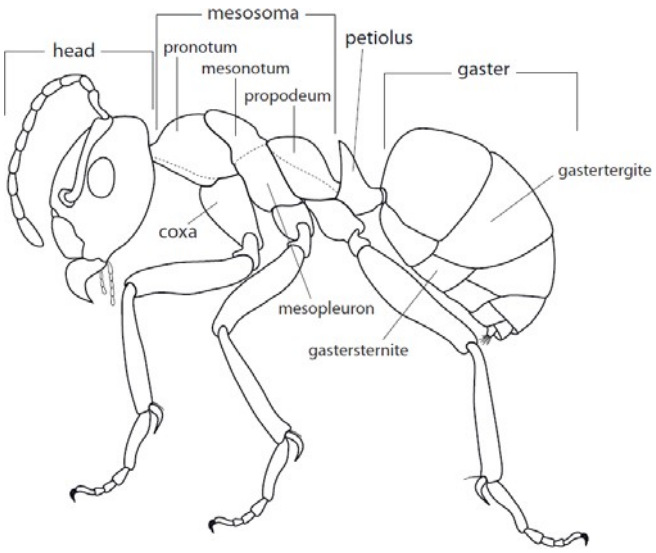
More species can be expected on all of these three islands.

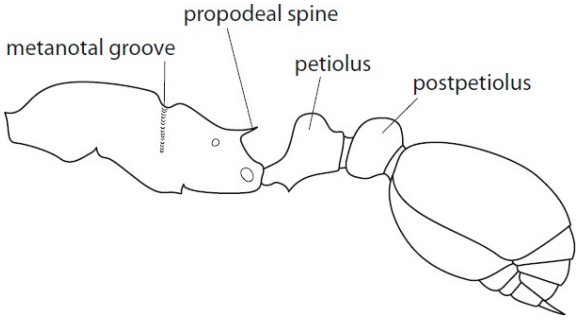
In processing the material I have received a lot of support from Frederique Bakker (Naturalis) for which my thanks.
This research would not have been possible without the extensive information on www.antweb.org and www.antwiki.org.
All (parts of) images are from antweb.org.
Finally, thanks to Jadranka Njegovan for the drawings with terms used in the key.

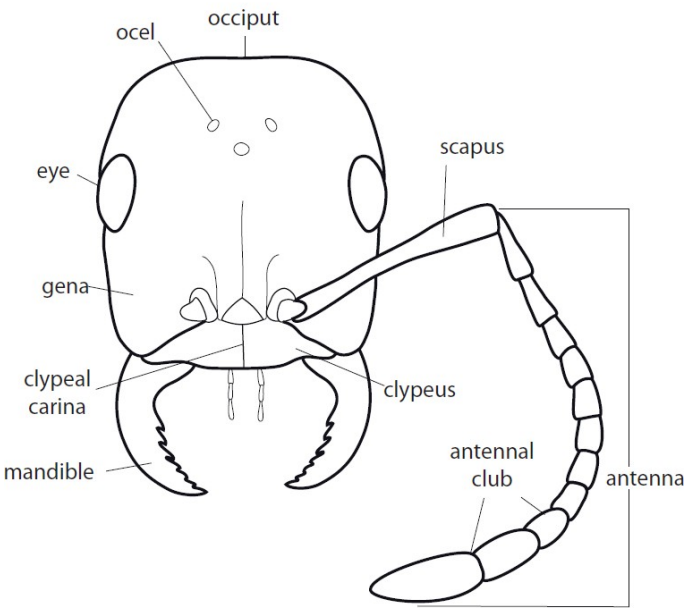
Additions and comments are very welcome.

How reliable is this key?
Compared to for example Europe, relatively little research has been done on ants in the Caribbean, especially where taxonomy is concerned. Some examples. Color is a poorly usable attribute that we don't like to use, but in some keys color is the only discriminating item. In a recent *Dorymyrmex* key the shape of the top of the propodeum is seriously overestimated, while it is a variable characteristic, but in the key it is a leading item. In the key about neotropical thief ants (*Solenopsis*) the drawings are sometimes different from the photos of the type specimens on AntWeb. So I regularly had to deal with characteristics for which I had no better ones available.

A species list of ants of Aruba and Curacao is available:
https://www.nlmieren.nl/websitepages/SPECIES%20LIST%20ARUBA.html
https://www.nlmieren.nl/websitepages/SPECIES%20LIST%20CURACAO.html
The species list of the Bonaire ants is in preparation.



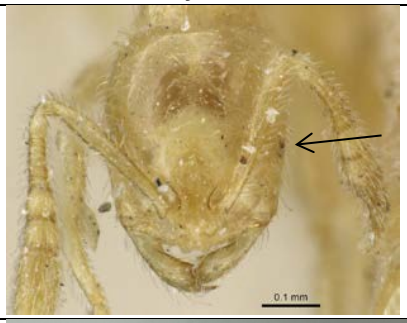




CW = maximum head wide
CL = head lenght
EYL = maximum eye length
EYW= maximum eye wide
REL = EYL/CL
SL = length of scapus
TLI = Length of thorax (Weber's length) x 100/CL

1a	Mandibles slender, elongated, without teeth.		*Leptogenys pubiceps*
1b	Other combination of characteristics.		➔2
2a	Between gaster and mesosoma two clearly separated nodules (petiolus and postpetiolus).		➔3
2b	Between gaster and mesosoma one nodule (petiolus); or node is invisible.		➔23
3a	Relatively long, slender ants, with conspicuous large eyes. Ocelli present.		*Pseudomyrmex* → 100
3b	Other combination of characteristics.		➔ 4
4a	Postpetiolus attached to dorsalsurface of first gastertergite. Gaster in dorsal view heart- shaped.		*Crematogaster* → 110
4b	Postpetiolus attached to frontal side of gaster.		➔ 5
5a	Dorsum of mesosoma strongly flattened. In frontal view: headlooks like a shield.		*Cephalotus pellans*
5b	Head not shield-like and mesosoma not flattened.		➔ 6

6a	Last gastertergite flat with short spines and/or teeth. Eyes very small. Scapi robust.		*Neivamyrmex* → 255
6b	Other combination of characteristics.		➔ 7
7a	Posterior side of the propodeum rounded, without spines of teeth.		➔ 8
7b	Posterior side of the propodeum with spines or teeth or at most angular.		➔ 15
8a	Antennal club 2-segmented.		➔ 9
8b	Antennal club 3-segmented.		➔ 12
9a	Postpetiolus in dorsal viewextraordinarily wide.		*Solenopsis globularia*
9b	Postpetiolus in doral view not extraordinarly broad.		➔ 10
10a	Each eye consists at most 5 ommatidia. Antennal segments between scapi and club short (wider than long). < 2,5 mm.		➔ 11
10b	Each eye consists at least 25 ommatidia. Antennal segments betweenscapus and club at least as long as wide. Big differences in size, > 2,5 mm.		*Solenopsis* 'fire ants' → 130
11a	Head with a rough surface structure.		*Carebara* sp. (not yet known from the ABC islands)
11b	Head smooth.		*Solenopsis* 'thief ants' → 140

12a	Eyes conspicuous, distinctly with more than twenty ommatidia.		➔ 13
12b	Eyes minute and point-like, consisting of only one or two ommatidia.		*Syllophopsis subcoeca*
13a	Petiolus without node, cylindrical.		*Xenomyrmex panamanus*
13b	Petiolus with node.		➔ 14
14a	In dorsal view: propodeum not costulate (‘striate’). Monomorph.		*Monomorium* → 150
14b	In dorsal view: propodeum transversely costulate (‘striate’). Polymorph.		*Trichomyrmex destructor*
15a	Postpetiolus (in dorsal view) subcircular, much wider than the petioles. Approximately 2 mm.		*Cardiocondyla* → 160
15b	Postpetiolus in doral view not extraordinarly wide.		➔ 16
16a	4- to 6-segmented antennae, 2-segmented antennal club; head without jaws triangular in shape, which means that the head above the eyes is much wider than at the mandibular joint. In frontal view the eyes are barely or not visible. Setae (partly) spatulate. Approximately 2 mm.		*Strumigenys* → 170
16b	Other combination of characteristics.		➔ 17
17a	Mesosoma with several spines and or knobs.		‘fungus-growing ants’ → 36
17b	Only 2 spines or teeth on the backside of the propodeum.		➔ 18
18a	Antennal club 2-segmented.		➔ 19
18b	Antennal club 3-segmented.		➔ 20

19a	Propodeal spines long. Clear antennal scrobes. Approximately 2mm.		*Wasmannia auropunctata*
19b	Propodeal spines short. Eyes verysmall.		*Carebara* sp. (not yet known from the ABC islands)
20a	Postpetiolus, in dorsal view, subtriangular, with a large impression at posterior margin, forming two distinct lobes, heart-shaped and dorsoventrally flattened.		➔ 35
20b	Postpetiolus, in dorsal view, not subtriangular, without impression, not heart-shaped.		➔ 21
21a	Eyes small, < 15 ommatidia.		*Rogeria curvipubens*
21b	Eyes well developed (> 15 ommatidia).		➔ 22

22a	Propodeum notably depressed below level of promesonotum (= pronotum + mesonotum). Workercaste strongly dimorphic.	 	*Pheidole* → 180
22b	Propodeum not depressed. Between the mandibles and theantennal sockets a rising ridge. Monomorphic.		*Tetramorium* → 250
23a	Mandibles long and straight; petiolus with 1 or 2 teeth or spines.		→ 24
23b	Mandibles not long and straight.		→ 25
24a	Petiolus with a tooth on each lateral corner. Approximately 4 mm.		*Anochetes* (not yet known from the ABC islands)
24b	Petiolus has one prominent vertical spine. > 9 mm.		*Odontomachus* → 280

25a	In dorsal view is petiolus not visible. Tip of gaster (apex) without a circular opening. Mesosoma without erected setae.		*Tapinoma melanocephalum*
25b	In dorsal view is petiolus visible.		➔ 26
26a	The gaster has a slight but distinct impression between the first and second gaster segments.		➔ 27
26b	Gaster without impressions.		➔ 29
27a	Very small eyes, close to the jaws. 2-3 mm.		*Hypoponera* → 270
27b	Developed eyes, in the middle or upper part of the head. > 3 mm.		➔ 28
28a	Head, mesosoma and gaster with pits (foveae), without striae; without erect setae. < 1 cm.		*Platythyrea punctata*
28b	Other combination of characteristics. > 1 cm.		*Ectatomma ruidum*
29a	Small ants with 9-segmented antenna. In dorsal view is the petiolus not visible. 1.5-2.5 mm.		*Brachymyrmex* → 210
29b	11- to 12-segmented antenna. > 2.5 mm.		➔ 30

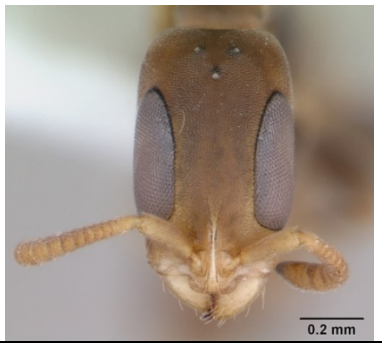
30a	Position of the eyes largely on or below the center of the head.	 	➔ 31
30b	Eyes in the top half of the head. > 3 mm.		*Camponotus* → 231
31a	Posterior side of propodeum flat or concave.		➔ 32
31b	Posterior side of propodeum rounded.		➔ 33

32a	Head and mesosoma sculptured, with shallow punctures. 		*Dolichoderus* → 200
32b	Angle of propodeum with a single medial dorsal tooth. 		*Dorymyrmex* → 260
33a	Scapi shorter. Gaster yellowish.		*Azteca flavigaster*
33b	Scapi long.		→ 34

34a	Scapi extra long, without erected pubescence. 		*Paratrechina longicornis*
34b	Scapi long, with erected pubescence. 		*Nylanderia* → 245
35a	Mesosoma with several spines and or knobs.		→ 36
35b	Mesosoma without marked spines or tubercles. 		*Kalathomyrmex emeryi*

36a	Gaster without spines, teeth or tubercles.		➔ 37
36b	Gaster with spines or tubercles. Antennal scrobe indistinct.		➔ 38
37a	Mesosoma with tubercles. Erect setae absent. Monomorphic. < 3.5 mm.		*Cyphomyrmex minutus*
37b	Mesosoma with prominent spines. Poly/dimorphic.		*Atta cephalotus*
38a	Mesosomal spines short.		*Paratrachymyrmex bugnioni*
38b	Mesosomal spines longer; the middle spines of the three pairs on the mesosoma are of the same length as the front spines, with the base of the middle spines much thicker than that of the front spines.		*Acromyrmex santschii*

Pseudomyrmex

100a	Head and mesosoma concolorous. Head elongated.		➔ 101
100b	Head and mesosomabicolored. Head more or less round.		*P. termitarius*
101a	Head extremely small. Dull. Mesosoma nearly without setae.		*P. tenuissimus*
101b	Head wider. (image: *P. curacaensis)*		➔ 102
102a	Mesosoma with setae. Petiolus about as high as long.		➔ 103
102b	Mesosoma (nearly) without setae. Petiolus longer than high. Clear dark spots or band on the first gastertergite. Very shiny.	 	*P. simplex*

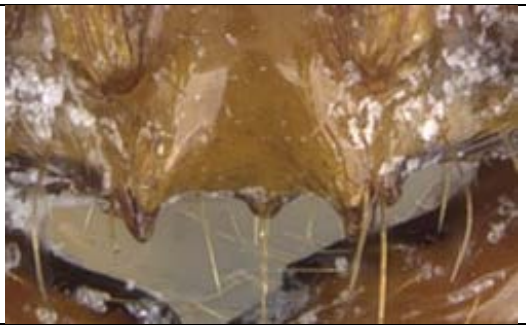
103a	Mesosoma covered with relatively long setae. > 4mm.		*P. curacaensis*
103b	Mesosoma with short setae. Darkly pigmented. < 4 mm.		*P. caecilae*

Crematogaster

110a	In dorsal view: the large propodal spines diverge widely. Pronotum with very spacious reticulate structure.		*C. curvispinosa* (presence on ABC islands uncertain)
110b	In dorsal view: the propodeal spines run more or less in the same line as those of the propodeum.		➔ 111
111a	Metanotal groove weak. Head and mesosoma with spatulate hairs.		*C. obscurata*
111b	Marked metanotal groove.		➔ 112
112a	Postpetiolus not bilobed.		*C. crinosa*

112b	Postpetiolus bilobed.		*C. distans*

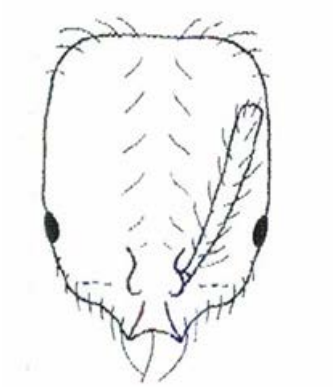
Solenopsis (fire ants)

130a	Major worker: clypeus, in full-face view, lacking median tooth.		*S. geminata*
130b	Major worker: clypeus, in full-face view, with conspicuous median tooth.		*S. invicta*

Solenopsis (thief ants)

140a	Petiolus in lateral view with a wide, rounded top (image of *S. azteca*)		➔ 141

140b	Petiolus in lateral view with a narrow top (image of *S. zeteki*)		➔ 143
141a	Clypeal carina diverge anteriorly. Eyes consists of 1 (-2) ommatidia. Head elongated. Head and mesosoma covered with short (sub-)erect setae.	 	*S. subterranea*
141b	Clypeal carina are running more or less parallel. Eyes with > 2 ommatidia. (images of *S. azteca*)		➔ 142
142a	Mesopleuron and petioli smooth and glossy. SL/CL < 60.		*S. azteca*
142b	Mesopleuron and petioli rough, with structure. 		*S. brevicornis*
143a	Gaster at most a little darker as mesosoma or head.		➔ 144

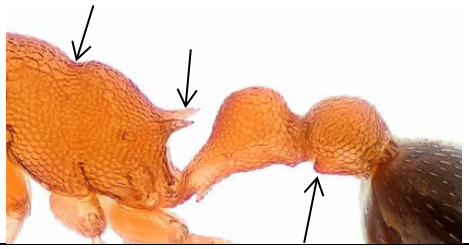
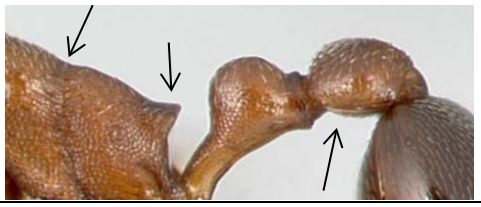
143b	Gaster dark, head and mesosoma yellow. Without extra lateral teeth on clypeus. Confusion with *S. azteca* is possible.		*S. basalis*
144a	Clypeus without extra lateral teeth. 		*S. zeteki*
144b	Clypeus with extra lateral teeth, 		*S. pollux*

*)
According to various authors, *S. corticalis* and *S. zeteki* workers are indistinguishable from each other.
According to Pachaeco & Mackay, the gynes of *S. zeteki* have significantly larger eyes than those of *S. corticalis*.
The measured eyes of a dozen ABC-islands gynes were all so large that they must be regarded as *S. zeteki*. This would imply that it is likely that the species occurring here is *S. zeteki*.

Monomorium

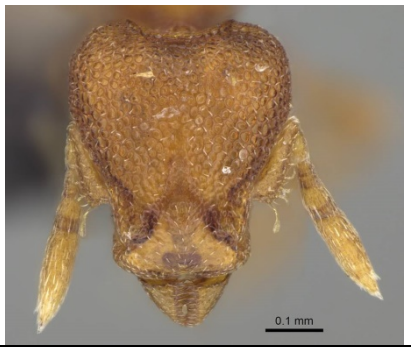
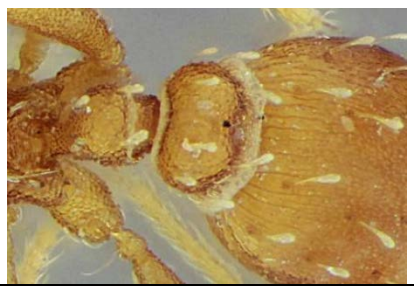
150a	Head and gaster dark, mesosoma much lighter in color.		*M. floricola*
150b	Head and mesosoma yellowish.		➔ 151
151a	Mesosoma without setae; small part of the anterior side of the 1st gastertergite is contrasting lighter than rest of the dark gaster. (To be confused with *Trichomyrmex*, 14b)		*M. sahlbergi*
151b	Mesosoma with > 2 setae. Gaster at most brownish darkened apically.		*M. pharaonis*

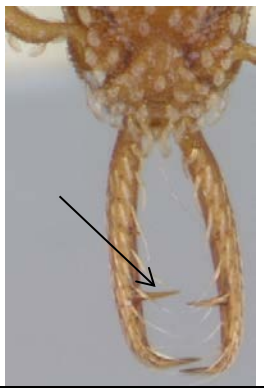
Cardiocondyla

160a	Metanotal groove clear. Propodeal spines slender and longer. In anterodorsolateral view the postpetiolar sternite with prominent anterolateral corners. (image of *C. obscurior*)		➔ 161
160b	Metanotal groove shallow. Propodeal spines short. Postpetiolar sternite without prominent anterolateral corners.		*C. mauritanica*
161a	Head longer: CL/CW 1.17-1.28. EYL 0.246		*C. emeryi*

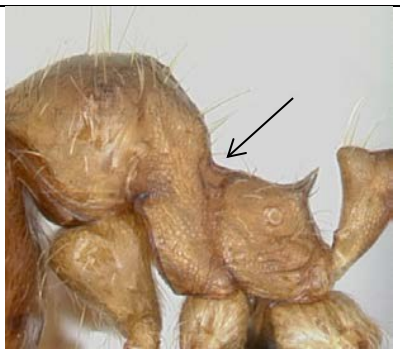
161b	Head shorter: CL/CW 1.06-1.17. EYL < 0,24		*C. obscurior* (not yet known from the ABC islands)

Strumigenys

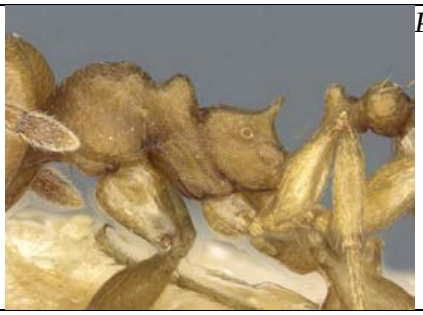
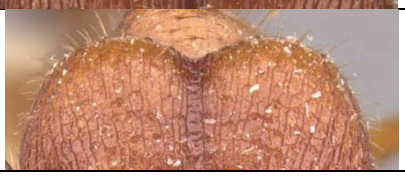
170a	Mandibles relatively short.		➔ 171
170b	Mandibles elongated.		➔ 172
171a	4-segmented antenna.		*S. emmae*
171b	6-segmented antenna.		*S. membranifera*
172a	Postpetiolus with ventral spongiform lobe. (*image: S. louisianae*)		➔ 173

172b	In lateral view, petiolus and postpetiolus lacking ventral spongiform lobe. Mesonotum with a pair of erect hairs. > 8 ommatidia/eye.		*S.eggersi*
173a	Preapical tooth nearly separated from apicodorsal tooth.		➔ 174
173b	Preapical tooth separated from apicodorsal tooth by about the length of the preapical tooth.		*S. schmalzi*
174a	> 6 ommatidia/eye. Hairs on leading edge of scape curved-spatulate. Jaws thicker.		*S. lousianae*
174b	4 ommatidia/eye. Small species: CW 0.33-0.37mm. Jaws slender.		*S. sylvestrii*

Pheidole

180a	In lateral view: mesosoma with one impression.		➔ 181

180b	In lateral view: mesosoma with two impressions.		➔ 183
181a	Major worker. Carinae on frontal sideof head do not reach the occipital border.		➔ 182
181b	Minor worker. Head and pronotum smooth, postpetiolus ventraly bulging. CW > 0.45 mm.	 	*P. megacephala*
182a	Relatively large species, CW >1,2 mm.		*P. megacephala*
182b	Small species, CW < 0,9 mm.		*P. arhuaca*

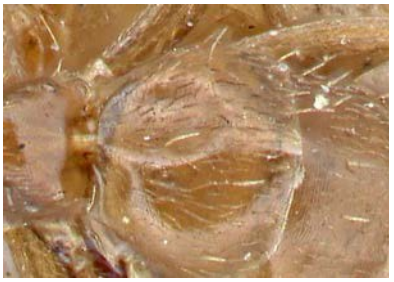
183a	Major worker.		➔ 184
183b	Minor worker.		➔ 190
184a	Mesosoma without setae or with some short appressed setae.		*P. radoszkowskii*
184b	Mesosoma with setae.		➔ 185
185a	Scapi exceeds occipital corner, or nearly.		➔ 186
185b	Scapi much shorter.		➔ 188
186a	Scapi just don't reach the occiput. →		*P. susannae* (unknown from the ABC islands)
186b	Scapi exceeds occipital corner.		➔ 187
187a	Dent in occiput shallow. Head in full face view mainly smooth.		*P. longiscapa*
187b	Dent in occiput deeper. Head in full face view with carinulae.		*P. kukrana* (unknown from the ABC islands)
188a	V-shaped dent in occiput.		*P. fallax*
188b	Wave-shaped dent in occiput.		➔ 189

189a	In dorsal view: postpetiolus <1,6 wider than petiolus, rounded.		*P. jelski* (unknown from the ABC islands)
189b	In dorsal view: postpetiolus >2 wider than postpetiolus, elliptical.		*P. indica*
190a	Head in frontal view foveolate,like mesosoma and petiole. Mesosoma without setae (very small workers with a few, shorterected setae).		*P. radoszkowskii*
190b	Head in frontal view smooth.		➔ 191
191a	Nuchal collar not (or hardly) extended (image of *P. indica*).		*P. indica/fallax*
191b	With nuchal collar. (image of *P. susannae*)		*P. longiscapa/ P. jelski/ P. susannae/ P. kukrana*

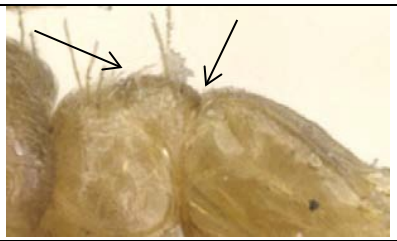
Dolichoderus

200a		*D. diversus*
200b		*D. bispinosus*

Brachymyrmex

210a	Gaster with sparse pubescence; distance between these > half their length.  	➔ 211
210b	Pubescence on gaster dense; distancebetween these < half their length.  	➔ 217
211a	Head and mesosoma yellow, gaster (partly) black.	*B. pictus* (unknown from the ABC islands)
211b	Body more or less unicolour.	➔ 212

212a	Mesosoma with 1 pair of setae on the pronotum. Yellowish. 8- 9 ommatidia along the maximal eye diameter. Metanotal groove clear. CL < 0.4 mm.		*B. minutus*
212b	Mesosoma with 2 pairs of setae, note that setae can break easily, thus reducing utility of this character in some specimens.		213
213a	Metanotal groove deep. Mesonotum bulging dorsally above the pronotum in lateral view.		214
213b	Metanotal groove shallow or invisible. Mesonotum not bulging dorsally.		215
214a	Metathoracic spiracul low, not protruding dorsally.		*B. musculus* (unknown from the ABC islands)
214b	Metanotal groove wider thanthe diameter of the metathoracic spiracles (Notethat the mesosomal setae are absent in *this* specimen).		*B. degener* (unknown from the ABC islands)
215a	Scapi surpassing the posterior cephalic margin by a length shorter than the maximal diameter of the eye.		➔ 216
215b	Scapi surpassing the posterior margin of the head by a length exceeding the maximum diameter of the eye. Metanotalgroove clear (not deep). Yellowish.		*B. aphidicola* (unknown from the ABC islands)
216a	Brownish. At least one central ocellus is present.		*B. patagonicus*

216b	Yellowish. Three inconspicuousocelli.		*B. australis*
217a	Scapi do not surpassing (just reach) the posterior margin of thehead. Yellowish.		*B. flavidulus*
217b	Scapi surpassing the posterior margin of the head.		➔ 218
218a	Mesonotum bulging dorsally above the pronotum in lateral view. Dull. (Light-)brownish.		*B. heeri* (unknown from the ABC islands)
218b	Mesonotum not bulging; shiny. Metanotal groove shallow.		➔ 219
219a	Yellowish. On average 7-9 ommatidia along the maximal eye diameter.  		*B. termitophilus*
219b	Darkly pigmented.		➔ 220
220a	On average 8-10 ommatidia along the maximal eye diameter. Pubescence less dense. CL < 0,5 mm.  		*B. obscurior*
220b	On average > 10 ommatidia along the maximal eyediameter. Pubescence denser. CL > 0,5 mm.  		*B. cordemoyi* (unknown from the ABC islands)

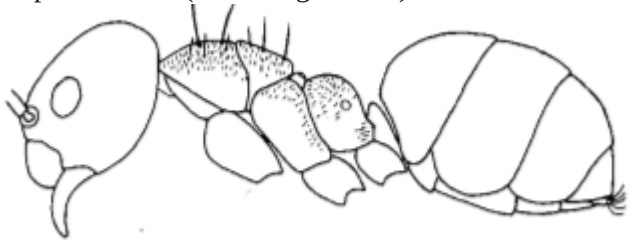
Camponotus

231a	With propodeal spines or teeth. Left: minorworker, right: majorworker.	 	*C. bispinosus*
231b	Without propodeal spines of teeth.		➔ 232
232a	Extreme medial convergence in the dense, appressed pubescence on the gastral tergites.		*C. blandus*
232b	Without pubescence in a convergence pattern.		➔ 233
233a	Strongly notched mesosomal lateral profile. Variable pale spots on gaster. Dark pigmented.		*C. sexguttatus*
233b	Other characteristics.		➔ 234
234a	Clypeus carinate with pronounced anterior lobe.		➔ 235
234b	Clypeus not carinate without pronounced anterior lobe.		➔ 236
235a	Scapi with erected pubescence. Never completely black.		*C. atriceps*

235b	Scapi without suberected pubescence. Head, mesosoma and gaster black.		*C. compositor*
236a	Posterior side of gastertergites mainly with a minimal yellow ridge. Head and gaster darker than mesosoma.		*C. simillimus*
236b	Higher proportion of yellow pigmentation on gaster tergites. Gaster in lateral view with transverse yellow bands on each tergite. Less setae on wholebody.	 	*C. coloratus*
237a	Few setae on mesosoma. Majorworker: top of scapus greatly widened. Major-worker: Lateral edges of the clypeus are parallel to slightly divergent. Minor-worker: KL/KB > 1,20; SL/KL > 1.00.	  	*C. curviscapus*
237b	Many setae on mesosoma. Major worker: top of scapus not widened.		➔ 238
238a	Pubescence on scapi appressed.		➔ 239

238b	Pubescence on scapi decumbent to subdecumbent. Mesosoma darker as head and gaster.		*C. pittieri*
239a	Gaster pubescence very dense. In lateral view propodeum gradually curved. Posterior half of head mainly black to dark brown. Mesosoma and gaster brown to black.		*C. zoc*
239b	Pubescence on second gastertergiet about the same length as the distance between that hairs. Mesosoma and gaster mainly black.		*C. lindigi*

Nylanderia

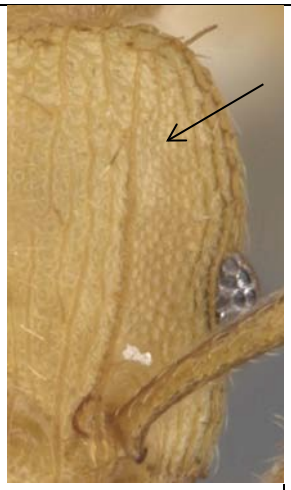
245a	Pubesence on dorsal side of gaster not dense.		*N. vividula* (unknown from the ABC islands)
245b	Pubescence on dorsal side of gaster dense.		➔ 246
246a	Abundant pubescence on mesopleuron or lateral portions of propodeum.		➔ 248
246b	Lateral portions of pronotum and propodeum and nearly complete mesopleuron without pubescence (after Trager 1984). 		➔ 249

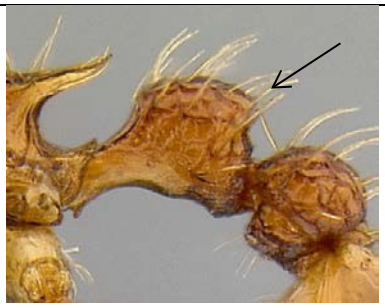
247a	Body reddish-brown to yellow;REL less than 30; mesosomal macrosetae long (index of longest pronotal macrosetae / propodeum height at least 60).		*N. fulva/pubens*
247b	Body dark brown to almost black. REL greater than 30. Mesosomal macrosetae short (index of longest pronotal macrosetae / propodeum heightless than 60).		*N. bourbonica*
248a	Body color brown to yellow; coxae always lighter than mesosoma, becoming white if specimen is yellow.		*N. guatemalensis*
248b	Body color brown to dark brown with meso/metacoxaecontrasting bright white to yellow with rest of body.		*N. steinheili*

Tetramorium

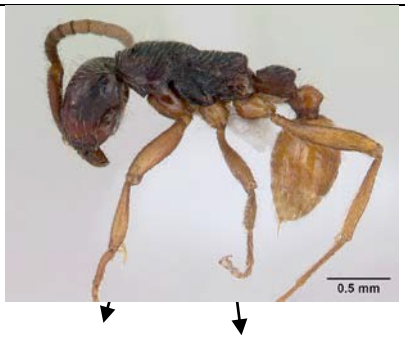
250a	Without very dense (and long) setosity.		➔ 251
250b	Very dense setosity.		*T. lanuginosum*

251a	Propodeal spines short, tooth-shaped; CW < 0.60.		➔ 252
251b	Propodeal spines long en pointed. CW > 0.60		➔ 253

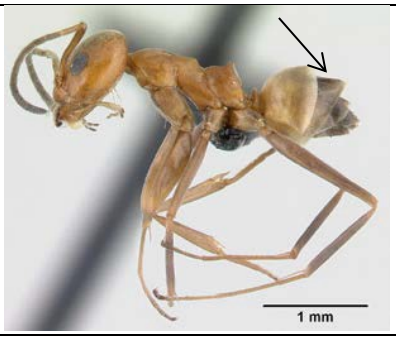
Top part of the antennal scrobes has the same structure as the rest of the scrobe.			Top part of the antennal scrobes has a different structure than the bottompart of the scrobe**.**
252a *T. simillimum*		252b *T. caldarium*	

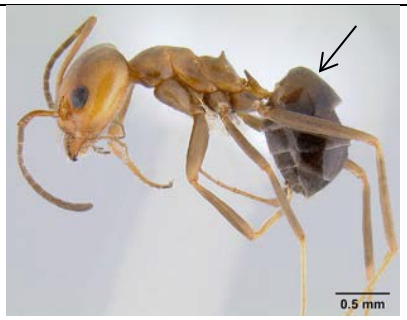
253a			*T. insolens* (unknown from the ABC islands)
253b			*T. bicarinatum*

Neivamyrmex

255a	Reddish. Propodeum notably depressedbelow level of mesonotum.		*N. curvinotus*
255b	Blackish. Propodeum a little depressedbelow level of mesonotum. Propodeum concave behind.		*N. iridescens*

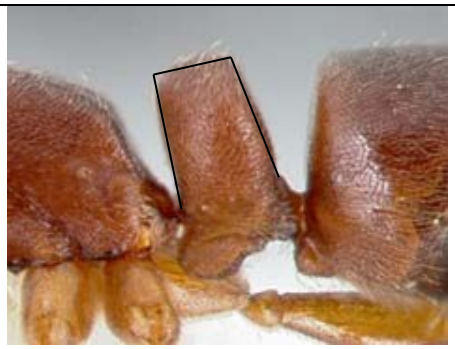
Dorymyrmex

260a	Mesosoma concolorous yellowish to light reddish brown.		➔ 261
260b	Medium brown to (partly) almost black.		➔ 262
261a	Mesosomal profile with a – more [or less] – developed nodule on the posterodorsal margin of the mesonotum. Gaster somewhat darker.		*D. biconis*

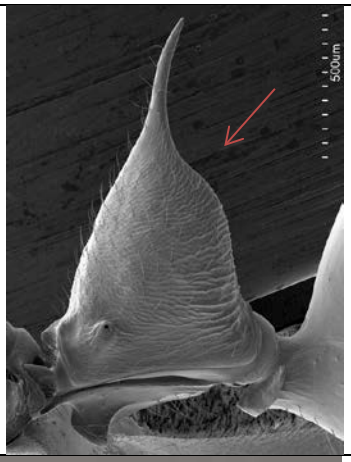
261b	Mesosomal profile with a – [more or] less – developed nodule on the posterodorsal margin of the mesonotum. Gaster completely dark.		*D. bicolor*
262a	TLI < 117. Scapi not surpassing the posterior margin of head more than twice its maximum diameter. Posteriormargin of head strongly convex.		*D. xerophilus*
262b	TLI > 117. Scapi surpassing the posterior margin of the head more than three times its maximum diameter. Posterior margin of head never convex.		*D.insanus*

Hypoponera

270a	Scapi do not surpassing the posterior margin of the head. Yellow to brownish.		*H. ergatandria*
270b	Scapi surpassing the posterior margin of the head.		➔ 271

271b		Perfectly parallel running anterior and posterior side of the petiole.	*H. opaciceps*
271c		Anterior and posterior side of the petiole more tapering.	*H. opacior*

Odontomachus

280a	Spike of the petiolus longer. The setae on the gaster mainly much longer (sometimes as much as 10x pubescence hairs). Usually very darkly pigmented. 		*O. bauri*
280b	Spike of the petiolus shorter. The setae on the gaster shorter (<5x the pubescence hairs). Usually reddish pigmented. 		*O. ruginodis*