



Heather Campbell and Benjamin Blanchard: *Ants: A visual guide*

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“Ants” is the answer that likely comes to mind when we think of an insect that everyone can easily identify, that plays pivotal roles in every ecosystem, and that is widespread across the globe (except for Antarctica). In six chapters, this book succeeds in summarising the morphology, phylogenesis, life history, ethology, and ecology of this exciting group; as well as its socio-economic and cultural value for humans. All the marvellous adaptations that tickle our imagination when we think about ants are discussed in the book: the competition (war) with other colonies, how they rescue injured nestmates, the symbiosis with other animals, fungi, and plants, and the variegated nest types they create; as well as the importance of ants for other organisms, how *Ophiocordyceps* fungi control ants to their advantage, and their use as human food (offering several examples in addition to the classical Mexican *escamoles*). The book is enriched by many stunning photographs (almost one per page) and 42 profiles. These profiles, which are all at the genus level except for one subfamily, provide information on biology accompanied by distribution maps. But the book

is not just a collection of amazing photographs: the text provides many intriguing information. I learned, for example, that *Colobopsis explodens* ants can sacrifice themselves to protect the colony by detonating their gaster (the last body segment) against a predator; *Aphanogaster* ants figured out that, by soaking objects (e.g. soil, leaves, or wood), they can bring back to the nest ten times more liquid food than they would otherwise carry in their crop; Ethiopian beekeepers place their beehives in trees colonised by territorial *Creमतogaster* ants to protect them against *Dorylus* ants that feed on the bee brood. The only weakness of the book is the lack of references, which would have made it more practical for researchers. Short texts written in plain language (a glossary is included at the end of the book) make this book suitable, and perhaps especially, for non-academics. Such a fantastic introduction to the world of ants will certainly spark the interest of the next generation of myrmecologists.

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