Special Issue

Ant Venom

Message from the Guest Editors

Along with a great ecological and behavioral plasticity, ants (Formicidae) are very diverse, with 17 extant subfamilies, 339 genera, and about 14,000 species described. They use a vast array of molecules in their eusociality. Among them, those contained in their venoms have greatly contributed to the fact that ants dominate almost all terrestrial environments. Indeed, ant venoms are versatile as they are involved not only in prey capture or self-defense like most venomous animals, but also in colony defense against arthropod and vertebrate predators, microbial pathogen control, communication (e.g., trail and alarm pheromones), the detoxification of the venom of other ants and, in symbiotic ant–plant mutualisms, the elimination of plants competing with their host myrmecophytes (i.e., plants sheltering ants in specific hollow structures).

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