

Non-technical summary

Rediscovery of *Pogonomyrmex badius* (Latreille) (Hymenoptera: Formicidae) in Mainland Mississippi, with an Analysis of Associated Seeds and Vegetation

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Before the introduction of red and black imported fire ants in the middle 1930s, the Florida harvester ant was a common species in sandy areas of central and southern Mississippi. It was believed that the Florida harvester ant had been virtually eliminated from Mississippi due to competition with the more aggressive fire ants and from widespread pesticide use. In 2006, the authors of this paper identified Florida harvester ants in mainland Mississippi for the first time since the 1930s. More colonies have since been identified. The relationships between these harvester ants and vegetation, as well as their use of charcoal and collection of seeds, are described in this paper, giving us an insight into the ecology of Mississippi prior to the arrival of the fire ants.