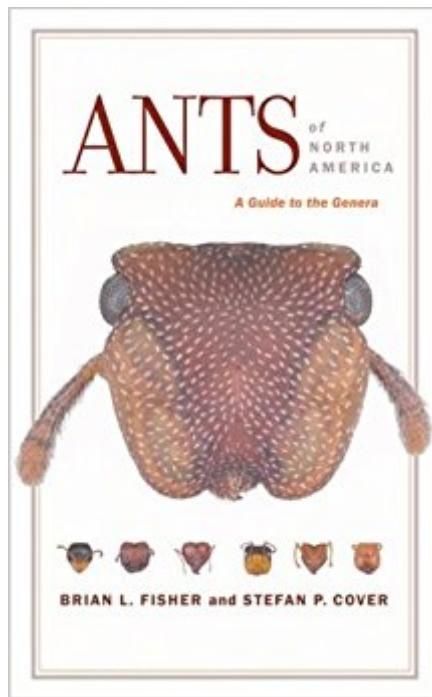


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# Ants Of North America: A Guide To The Genera



## Synopsis

Ants are among the most conspicuous and the most ecologically important of insects. This concise, easy-to-use, authoritative identification guide introduces the fascinating and diverse ant fauna of the United States and Canada. It features the first illustrated key to North American ant genera, discusses distribution patterns, explores ant ecology and natural history, and includes a list of all currently recognized ant species in this large region. \* New keys to the 73 North American ant genera illustrated with 250 line drawings ensure accurate identification\* 180 color images show the head and profile of each genus and important species groups\* Includes a glossary of important terms

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## Customer Reviews

Ants are one of the groups of organisms that I found fascinating from an early age. I finally settled on spiders, but ants were always in the back of my mind on the numerous field trips on which I went to pursue my eight-legged quarry. However, guides to ants were few and far between and when I was given a copy of Creighton's "The Ants of North America" I was almost as confused as I was before. While the illustrations were good, the descriptions and keys were a bit difficult and of course even by the time I was given the book, it was quite dated. We have long needed a book such as Brian Fisher and Stefan Cover have produced in "Ants of North America: A Guide to the Genera". Among other things the photos of actual specimens are a great help in determining the genera (and in some cases sub-genera) that anyone might encounter in a backyard or in the wild. The keys are

both very good and well illustrated. A good hand lens will be sufficient with many, but the size of some requires a good binocular dissecting microscope (one reason that ants are less popular than butterflies, dragonflies or even moths). Still both professional entomologists and serious amateurs will find this book very useful as a first step in the identification of the ant fauna. Because I am a professional biologist and an entomologist I found that, although I do not know the authors, I do know at least six of the people listed in the acknowledgements - such is the small size of the entomological community. I recommend this book highly and only wish that something like it was available when I was becoming interested in the tiny life around us.

"Ants of North America: A Guide to the Genera" by Brian Fisher and Stefan Cover is quite simply the best identification guide (down to the genus level) available for these fascinating insects. Combining straightforward identification keys that contain excellent line drawings of pertinent ant features with April Nobile's detailed automontage pictures, this publication functions both as a "working book" and a page-by-page display of the true beauty and diversity of these ants. The alphabetical method of ordering the genera descriptions is also to be saluted. As the subfamily level gets re-shuffled over the years, the alphabet stays the same, and so provides a user-friendly way to thumb through the genera. All of the genus listings contain both a head-on and lateral picture of the ant, along with diagnostic remarks and brief distribution and ecological information. This book belongs on the bookshelf and lab workbench of every myrmecologist, and certainly any ecologist that works within the conservation field performing biodiversity surveys. It has been said that you cannot begin to understand the species you are trying to preserve if you cannot identify them, and so this book will allow any ecologist with basic entomology skills the ability to identify, as E.O. Wilson describes ants, the "little things that run the world."

This book provides a wonderful doorway into the art of ant identification. The keys are well tested and current. The photographs of a representative ant from each genus are stunning. The lists of North American genera and species are very useful as is the list of literature for identifying species. I wish I had had this book 30 years ago when I first started learning to identify ants! This is a must have book for everyone who studies North American ants. It should also be in the libraries of all field stations and any institution of higher learning that teaches classes in the natural sciences.

I am a myrmecologist, and this is definitely the most helpful (and portable) ant key I have come across. It is full of excellent illustrations and intuitive couplets, but having said that, this book deals

only with genera found in the USA, not whole North America. The first part of the book is the dichotomous key, whereas the second part describes each genus in detail (ecology, morphological characteristics, the most recent literature dealing with that genus, etc.) The authors have even managed to squeeze in a couple of (ant) jokes and funny anecdotes into this part of the text. The last part of the book contains the list of all known species in North America. The authors have made one mistake that I am aware of, and that is on page 111, where they state that genus *Monomorium* has 11 antennal segments while they actually have 12.

I am an entomologist who is interested in ants associated with treehoppers. Brian Fisher's guide to *Ant Genera of North America* is an excellent guide for ant identification at the generic level. He provides current higher taxonomic placement of the genus to subfamily, number of species in the genus for North America, the key diagnostic characters for the genus to go along with the excellent color facial and lateral pictures of representative species in the genus, and distribution information of some species along with their ecology. The Beginning of the book provides an excellent taxonomic key to the genera with helpful line drawings of the key characters. The end of the book gives a species list for North America, a glossary of terms used in the keys and generic descriptions and a reference list of primary papers on each genus. There has been a dire need among ant workers for an update of Creighton's monumental work of *Ants of North America* in 1950. This work, provides in a compact format, all that is needed to identify any ant collected in North America to genus. I highly recommend this reference to any naturalist interested in this fascinating group of insects. Dawn F (NC)

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