

Notes from Underground

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On the Nearctic distribution of *Lasius niger*

In his world revision of the genus *Lasius* in 1955 Ed. Wilson concluded from material in hands that *Lasius niger* has a Western only distribution in the Nearctic region. Recent sampling data reveal that this ant is well established and flourishing in Montréal City, and in two Monteregienne Monts, south of Montréal: in the Gault Reserve own by McGill University on Saint-Hilaire Montain and in Saint-Bruno Montain. In this latter site presently studied by a Master student of the Université du Québec à Montréal *Lasius niger* is the dominant ant of an apple orchard, stretching on two hectares, abandoned for 5 years. It builds numerous mounds like in Europe and cares for aphids on shrubs and trees. I also have a series from Halifax, Nova Scotia province.

These data raise the question to know wether these populations are native or introduced. But the present observed colonies are established in man-made habitats (urban areas) or strongly modified by anthropic activities. Before concluding on the side of an introduction more data are needed from other territories like Ontario and Maritime provinces and from New England. Already available series in collections either unidentified or named *Lasius neoniger* should be reexamined and new ones collected. Any information or data would be appreciated.

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