

Common names for Australian ants (Hymenoptera: Formicidae)

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Abstract Most insects do not have common names, and this is a significant barrier to public interest in them, and to their study by non-specialists. This holds for even highly familiar insect groups such as ants. Here, I propose common names for all major native Australian ant genera and species-groups, as well as for many of the most abundant and distinctive species. Sixty-two genera, 142 species-groups and 50 species are given names. The naming system closely follows taxonomic structure; typically a genus is given a general common name, under which species-group and species names are nested.

Key words ant species, communicating entomology, species-groups, taxonomic nomenclature.

INTRODUCTION

Common names are powerful aids for the popular communication of information about plant and animal species. Such names use familiar and easily remembered words, in contrast to the taxonomic nomenclature that is so daunting for most people without formal scientific training. All higher-profile vertebrates and vascular plants have widely accepted common names. These increase the accessibility of these species to a wide public audience, and promote interest in them. In contrast, the vast majority of insects and other arthropods have no common name beyond the ordinal level, unless they are important pests (Naumann 1993). Relatively high-profile groups such as butterflies are notable exceptions (Miller 1992; Braby 2000), and the availability of common names helps attract public interest in them (Braby *et al.* 1997).

For most insect groups, however, a lack of common names consigns them to public obscurity. It also puts them in the ‘too-hard basket’ from the perspective of most amateur naturalists and indeed, many researchers with a background in traditional wildlife biology. In short, a lack of common names would appear to be one reason why the study of most insect groups remains largely within the exclusive domain of specialist entomologists. Given Australia’s relatively small number of specialist entomologists, particularly when measured against its ‘megadiverse’ insect fauna, anything that promotes public interest in insects should be encouraged.

Ants are one of the most familiar groups of insects throughout the world, and are arguably the most important faunal group in the Australian environment (Matthews & Kitching 1984). They are widely used as biological indicators of ecosystem health (Majer 1983; Andersen 1990). In the face of such prominence, there is a remarkable lack of common names for ants. To most Australians, there are just three types of ant: bull ants (typically referring to species of *Myrmecia* spp.), sugar ants (usually *Camponotus* spp.), and

‘little black ones’ (the remaining several thousand Australian species). Here, I attempt to redress this situation by proposing common names for all major native Australian ant genera and species-groups, as well as for many abundant and distinctive species.

PROPOSED ANT COMMON NAMES

Proposed common names, and explanations for them, for 62 genera, 142 species-groups and 50 species of Australian ants are presented in Appendix I, Table A1. Species-groups follow Andersen (1991a, 2000), and authorities for genera and species are listed in Taylor and Brown (1985) and Shattuck (1999).

The system of common names closely follows taxonomic structure. Each genus is given a general common name, under which species-group and species names are nested. The advantage of this approach is that the common names reflect higher taxa and therefore indicate systematic relationships (Miller 1992; Braby *et al.* 1997). A disadvantage is that species-level names are composed of multiple words, which can be rather cumbersome. However, this would seem inevitable when dealing with highly diverse genera containing poorly known species, with no history of common names. Moreover, names at the species-group or genus level will suffice for most popular communication about ants, particularly given that most Australian species do not even have scientific names.

EXISTING ANT COMMON NAMES

The online catalogue of Australian Insect Common Names (AICN) (CSIRO 2001) lists common names for 15 native Australian ant species and three genera. In many cases the names proposed here are consistent with these (Table 1). The following are cases where I believe existing AICN names are inappropriate:

Table 1 Existing common names for native Australian ants as catalogued in Australian Insect Common Names (CSIRO, 2001), with new common names proposed here

Scientific name	AICN common name	Proposed common name
<i>Aenictus</i> spp.	Army ants	Lesser army ants
<i>Aphaenogaster pythia</i>	Funnel ant	Funnel ant
<i>Camponotus consobrinus</i>	Sugar ant	Banded sugar ant
<i>Crematogaster laeviceps chasei</i>	Cocktail ant	Valentine ant
<i>Doleromyrma darwiniana</i>	Brown house ant	None
<i>Iridomyrmex purpureus</i>	Meat ant	Southern meat ant
<i>Iridomyrmex</i> spp.	Meat ants	Tyrant ants
<i>Melophorus bagoti</i>	Honeypot ant	Bagot's furnace ant
<i>Myrmecia brevinoda</i>	Giant bulldog ant	Giant bull ant
<i>Nothomyrmecia macrops</i>	Dinosaur ant	Dinosaur ant
<i>Ochetellus glaber</i>	Black house ant	Black house ant
<i>Oecophylla smaragdina</i>	Green tree ant, or weaver ant	Green tree ant
<i>Onychomyrmex</i> spp.	Army ants	False army ants
<i>Pheidole ampla</i> , <i>P. anthracina</i>	Seedharvesting ants	Big-headed ants
<i>Polyrhachis macropus</i>	Mulga ant	Mulga spiny ant
<i>Polyrhachis ornata</i>	Golden ant	Superb spiny ant
<i>Rhytidoponera</i> spp.	Greenhead ants	Pony ants

- *Crematogaster laeviceps chasei* (AICN name: cocktail ant). The term 'cocktail ant' is more appropriately applied to species with a stronger aroma, such as those of *Anonychomyrma* and *Papyrius*.
- *Doleromyrma darwiniana* (brown house ant). This species is not particularly associated with human settlement. Several other common pest ants in houses are similarly 'brown'.
- *Iridomyrmex* spp. (meat ants). The term meat ant should be reserved for the distinctive *purpureus* group of *Iridomyrmex*, rather than the entire genus.
- *Melophorus bagoti* (honeypot ant). The extent to which this species maintains repletes ('honey pots') is unclear, and the term 'honey pot ant' is more commonly applied to the highly familiar *Camponotus inflatus*.
- *Pheidole* spp. (seed-harvesting ants). The extent of granivory varies greatly within *Pheidole* (Andersen 1991b). Species of the *hartmeyeri* group are specialist harvesters (Table 1), but some other groups do not appear to be at all granivorous.
- *Polyrhachis ornata* (golden ant). Species from a range of genera are covered with golden pubescence, and such pubescence occurs independently within several subgenera of *Polyrhachis*. The term 'golden' is therefore not very informative.
- *Rhytidoponera* spp. (greenhead ants). The term 'greenhead ant' is commonly applied to a species of the metallic group in south-eastern Queensland, but a green head is not at all characteristic of the genus.

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APPENDIX I

Table AI Proposed common names for major Australian ant genera and species-groups, and some abundant and distinctive species

Scientific name	Common name	Explanation
Subfamily Aenictinae		
<i>Aenictus</i>	Lesser army ants	True army ants, but small, monomorphic and without the nomadic lifestyle of their famous cousins (Gotwald 1995)
<i>A. atratus</i>	Black lesser army ant	Colour black
<i>A. ceylonicus</i> group	Yellow lesser army ants	Colour yellowish
Subfamily Cerapachyinae		
<i>Cerapachys</i>	Cannibal ants	As with the related <i>Sphinctomyrmex</i> , specialist ant brood-raiders
<i>C. brevis</i> group	Little cannibal ants	Small species
<i>C. clarki</i> group	Speckled cannibal ants	Dorsum of petiolar node often punctate
<i>C. edentatus</i> group	Blind cannibal ants	Eyes absent
<i>C. fervidus</i> group	Two-lined cannibal ants	Dorsolateral margins of trunk with carinae running their entire length
<i>C. longitarsus</i> group	Topless cannibal ants	Trunk without distinct dorsal face
<i>C. singularis</i> group	Angle-headed cannibal ants	Head with lateral carinae
<i>Sphinctomyrmex</i>	Sausage cannibal ants	See <i>Cerapachys</i> ; gaster elongate and serially constricted
Subfamily Dolichoderinae		
<i>Anonychomyrma</i>	Black cocktail ants	Strongly aromatic; uniformly black
<i>A. biconvexa</i>	Forest black cocktail ant	Occurs in wetter forests
<i>A. gilberti</i>	Golden black cocktail ant	Golden pubescence
<i>Dolichoderus</i>	Dolly ants	Derived from genus name
<i>D. australis</i> group	Soft dolly ants	Integument relatively thin and feebly sculptured
<i>D. doriae</i> group	Double-spined dolly ants	Pronotum and propodeum each with a pair of spines
<i>D. reflexus</i> group	Shark-finned dolly ants	Propodeum raised and reflexed backwards
<i>D. scrobiculatus</i>	Northern shark-finned dolly ant	Most northerly species of the group
<i>D. scabridus</i> group	Spiny dolly ants	Propodeum with a pair of spines
<i>Froggattella</i>	Froglet ants	Modified from genus name
<i>F. kirbii</i>	Common froglet ant	Most common and widely distributed of the two species

Scientific name	Common name	Explanation
<i>Iridomyrmex</i>	Tyrant ants	Behaviourally dominant and highly aggressive
<i>I. agilis</i> group	Agile tyrant ants	Derived from species-group name
<i>I. anceps</i> group	Tropical tyrant ants	Tropical distribution
<i>I. bicknelli</i> group	Dome-headed tyrant ants	Posterior of head characteristically dome-shaped
<i>I. calvus</i> group	Calvus tyrant ants	Derived from species-group name
<i>I. conifer</i> group	Coned tyrant ants	Conical propodeum
<i>I. cyaneus</i> group	Blue tyrant ants	Integument with bluish iridescence
<i>I. gracilis</i> group	Gracile tyrant ants	Derived from species-group name
<i>I. mattirolói</i> group	Little tyrant ants	Smallest of all <i>Iridomyrmex</i>
<i>I. pallidus</i> group	Pale tyrant ants	Colour yellowish
<i>I. purpureus</i> group	Meat ants	Established common name (Shattuck 1993)
<i>I. greensladei</i>	Greenslade's meat ant	Derived from species name
<i>I. lividus</i>	Blue meat ant	Integument with blue iridescence
<i>I. purpureus</i>	Southern meat ant	Most common species in south-eastern Australia
<i>I. reburrus</i>	Bearded meat ant	Sides of head with short hairs
<i>I. sanguineus</i>	Northern meat ant	Most common species in northern Australia
<i>I. viridiaeneus</i>	Centralian meat ant	Most common species in central Australia
<i>I. rufoinclinus</i> group	Northern bearded tyrant ants	As with closely related <i>viridigaster</i> group, underside of head with numerous long, curved hairs; occurs in northern arid zone
<i>I. rufoniger</i> group	Tufted tyrant ants	Pronotum with tuft of hairs
<i>I. suchieri</i> group	Flat-backed tyrant ants	Flattened propodeum
<i>I. vicina</i> group	Southern tyrant ants	Occurring in cool-temperate Australia
<i>I. viridigaster</i> group	Southern bearded tyrant ants	See <i>rufoinclinus</i> group; occurs in southern arid zone
<i>Leptomyrmex</i>	Spider ants	Exceptionally long legs give them a spider-like appearance
<i>L. erythrocephalus</i>	Red-headed spider ant	Uniformly black except for contrasting red head
<i>Ochetellus</i>		
<i>O. flavipes</i>	Spinifex ant	Established common name, because of association with species of <i>Triodia</i> (Morton & Christian 1994)
<i>O. glaber</i> group	Black house ants	Established common name
<i>Papyrius</i>	Red cocktail ants	Strongly aromatic; uniformly reddish brown
<i>Tapinoma</i>	Pedicel ants	As in <i>Technomyrmex</i> , propodeum without distinct node
<i>T. minutum</i> group	Dwarf pedicel ants	Tiny size
<i>Technomyrmex</i>	Tropical pedicel ants	See <i>Tapinoma</i> ; occurring primarily in the tropics
<i>Turneria</i>	Turner ants	Derived from genus name
Subfamily Formicinae		
<i>Acropyga</i>	Root-aphid ants	Tend root aphids for honeydew
<i>Calomyrmex</i>	Beauty ants	English translation of genus name
<i>C. impavidus</i>	Black beauty ant	Uniformly black
<i>C. purpureus</i>	Speckled beauty ant	Trunk densely punctate
<i>C. splendidus</i>	Bauble beauty ant	Iridescent bauble-like gaster
<i>Camponotus</i>	Sugar ants	Established common name
<i>C. anderseni</i>	Mangrove plug ant	As with species of the <i>gasseri</i> , <i>janeti</i> , <i>macrocephalus</i> , <i>reticulatus</i> and <i>vitreus</i> groups, major workers phragmotic, using their heads to plug nest entrances (McArthur & Shattuck 2001). Nests exclusively in mangroves (Nielsen 2000)
<i>C. aurocinctus</i> group	Golden bearded sugar ants	Along with the related <i>ceriseipes</i> , <i>denticulatus</i> and <i>terebrans</i> groups, has a tuft of J-shaped hairs on the gula. Species of the <i>aurocinctus</i> group characteristically have a strikingly golden gaster
<i>C. ceriseipes</i> group	Southern bearded sugar ants	See <i>aurocinctus</i> group. Occurs primarily in the southern semi-arid zone

Scientific name	Common name	Explanation
<i>C. claripes</i> group	Pale-legged sugar ants	Pale legged
<i>C. denticulatus</i> group	Money-box sugar ants	See <i>aurocinctus</i> group. Nests have a slit-shaped entrance
<i>C. discors</i> group	Yellow disc sugar ants	As in <i>evae</i> group, trunk rounded in profile, disc-like; colour yellowish
<i>C. ephippium</i> group	Jumbuck sugar ants	Minor workers with angular, sheep-like heads
<i>C. evae</i> group	Black disc sugar ants	See <i>discors</i> group; colour black
<i>C. gasseri</i> group	Southern plug ants	See <i>C. anderseni</i> . Only 'plug ants' with a southern distribution
<i>C. innexus</i> group	Antarctic sugar ants	One of the few species-groups centred on cool-temperate southern Australia
<i>C. intrepidus</i> group	Flumed sugar ants	Nests often with chimney-like entrances
<i>C. agilis</i>	Agile flumed sugar ant	From species name
<i>C. bendigensis</i>	Red-legged flumed sugar ant	Blackish body with contrasting red legs
<i>C. intrepidus</i>	Coastal flumed sugar ant	Restricted to coastal south-eastern Australia
<i>C. molossus</i>	Western flumed sugar ant	Only species occurring in Western Australia
<i>C. piliventris</i>	Inland flumed sugar ant	Widespread in inland south-eastern Australia
<i>C. suffusus</i>	Golden flumed sugar ant	Gaster with golden pubescence
<i>C. janeti</i> group	Janet's plug ants	See <i>C. anderseni</i> . From species-group name
<i>C. macrocephalus</i> group	Rectangle plug ants	See <i>C. anderseni</i> . Rectangular trunk
<i>C. howensis</i>	Lord Howe Island rectangle plug ant	Endemic to Lord Howe Island
<i>C. macrocephalus</i>	Southern rectangle plug ant	Occurring in south-eastern Australia
<i>C. minimus</i> group	Pygmy sugar ants	Very small for <i>Camponotus</i>
<i>C. nigriceps</i> group	Common sugar ants	Most conspicuous species-group in southern Australia (McArthur & Adams 1996)
<i>C. consobrinus</i>	Banded sugar ant	First gastric segment orange, contrasting with remaining segments
<i>C. nigriceps</i>	Black-headed sugar ant	From species name
<i>C. prostans</i>	Western sugar ant	Restricted to south-western Australia
<i>C. nigroaeneus</i> group	Black sugar ants	Most common species are uniformly black
<i>C. aeneopilosus</i>	Golden black sugar ant	Gaster with striking golden pubescence
<i>C. amperei</i>	Mallee black sugar ant	Widespread in mallee habitats of south-eastern Australia
<i>C. inflatus</i>	Australian honey-pot ant	Australia's best-known honey-pot ant
<i>C. nigroaeneus</i>	Southern black sugar ant	Restricted to mesic south-eastern Australia
<i>C. novaehollandiae</i> group	Northern sugar ants	Most common <i>Camponotus</i> in northern Australia
<i>C. pallax</i> group	Silver sugar ants	Typically with silvery pubescence
<i>C. reticulatus</i> group	Netted plug ants	See <i>C. anderseni</i> . From species-group name
<i>C. rubiginosus</i> group	Coconut sugar ants	Strong coconut smell when crushed
<i>C. subnitidus</i> group	Aerial sugar ants	Antennae glabrous and exceptionally long
<i>C. terebrans</i> group	Brown bearded sugar ants	See <i>aurocinctus</i> group. Colour brownish
<i>C. vitreus</i> group	Northern plug ants	See <i>C. anderseni</i> . Tropical distribution
<i>C. vitreus</i>	Common northern plug ant	By far most common species
<i>C. whitei</i> group	Armoured sugar ants	Integument thick and heavily sculptured
<i>C. whitei</i>	Common armoured sugar ant	Most common and widely distributed species of group
<i>C. group A</i> (Andersen 2000)	Northern bearded sugar ants	See <i>aurocinctus</i> group. Occurs primarily in the western monsoonal tropics
<i>Melophorus</i>	Furnace ants	Exceptionally thermophilic
<i>M. aeneovirens</i> group	Giant beaked furnace ants	As in related <i>froggatti</i> group and groups A and B, clypeus projecting over base of mandibles. Very large ants
<i>M. anderseni</i> group	Northern robber furnace ants	As with species of the related <i>fulvihirtus</i> group, these ants 'rob' brood from the nests of meat ants; occurring in the northern arid zone (Agosti 1997)
<i>M. bruneus</i> group	Brown furnace ants	From species-group name

Scientific name	Common name	Explanation
<i>M. fieldi</i> group	Field furnace ants	From species-group name
<i>M. froggatti</i> group	Froggatt's beaked furnace ants	See <i>aeneovirens</i> group
<i>M. fulvihirtus</i> group	Southern robber furnace ants	See <i>anderseni</i> group; occurs in southern arid zone (Clark 1941)
<i>M. hirsutus</i> group	Barrel furnace ants	Trunk barrel-shaped
<i>M. iridescens</i> group	Racing furnace ants	Long-legged and particularly fast-moving
<i>M. bagoti</i>	Bagot's furnace ant	From species name
<i>M. mjobergi</i> group	Pygmy furnace ants	Very small species
<i>M. pillipes</i> group	Bottle-brush furnace ants	Tibiae clothed with long erect hairs
<i>M. potteri</i> group	Bulldozer furnace ants	Stout species with large mandibles, giving them the appearance of miniature bulldozers; specialist predators of termites (McAreevey 1947)
<i>M. wheeleri</i> group	Harvester furnace ants	Specialist seed-harvesters
<i>M.</i> group A (Andersen 2000)	Gracile beaked furnace ants	See <i>aeneovirens</i> group. Slim trunk and long legs
<i>M.</i> group B (Andersen 2000)	Beaded beaked furnace ants	See <i>aeneovirens</i> group. Antennae with bead-like segments
<i>M.</i> group C (Andersen 2000)	Silver furnace ants	Covered with silver pubescence
<i>M.</i> group D (Andersen 2000)	Robust furnace ants	Trunk and legs relatively short and stout
<i>M.</i> group E (Andersen 2000)	Rough furnace ants	Integument conspicuously sculptured
<i>M.</i> group F (Andersen 2000)	Mystery furnace ants	Taxonomic relationships with other groups a mystery!
<i>Myrmecorhynchus</i>	Possum ants	Arboreal
<i>Notoncus</i>	Epaulet ants	Prominent pronotal shoulders
<i>N. ectatommoides</i> group	Pronged epaulet ants	Pronged metanotal projection
<i>N. enormis</i> group	Bulbous epaulet ants	Bulbous metanotal projection
<i>N. gilberti</i> group	Smooth epaulet ants	Integument almost entirely smooth and shiny
<i>N. hickmani</i> group	Yellow epaulet ants	Characteristically pale in colour
<i>N. spinisquamus</i> group	Giant epaulet ants	Largest of all <i>Notoncus</i>
<i>Notostigma</i>	False sugar ants	<i>Camponotus</i> -like
<i>Oecophylla smaragdina</i>	Green tree ant	Established common name in northern Australia, where local populations have a strikingly green gaster
<i>Opisthopsis</i>	Strobe ants	Jerky motion
<i>O. diadematus</i> group	Black-capped strobe ants	Posterior part of head black
<i>O. haddoni</i>	Savanna strobe ant	Most common species in monsoonal zone
<i>O. major</i>	Tufted strobe ant	Pronotum with tuft of hairs
<i>O. pictus</i>	Painted strobe ant	From species name
<i>O. rufithorax</i>	Black-headed strobe ant	Head entirely black
<i>O. rufoniger</i>	Red-headed strobe ant	Head entirely red
<i>Paratrechina</i>	Parrot ants	Derived phonetically from genus name
<i>P. minutula</i> group	Baby parrot ants	Very small
<i>P. obscura</i> group	Swamp parrot ants	Characteristic of fringes of wetlands and other waterlogged habitats
<i>P. vaga</i> group	Forest parrot ants	Widespread in forests and woodlands
<i>Polyrhachis</i>	Spiny ants	Trunk and petiole characteristically spiny
subgenus <i>Campomyrma</i>	No general common name	Extremely variable morphologically
<i>P. femorata</i> group	Broad-nosed spiny ants	Frontal carinae very widely separated
<i>P. femorata</i>	Southern broad-nosed spiny ant	Occurring in south-eastern Australia
<i>P. flavibasis</i>	Northern broad-nosed spiny ant	Occurring in north-eastern Australia
<i>P. gravis</i> group	Gravis spiny ants	From species name
<i>P. pseudothrinax</i>	Unicorn spiny ant	Petiolar node with single, long medial spine
<i>P. hirsuta</i> group	Hairy spiny ants	From species-group name
<i>P. inconspicua</i> group	Little spiny ants	Relatively small size

Scientific name	Common name	Explanation
<i>P. macropus</i> group	Mulga spiny ants	Characteristic of mulga habitats
<i>P. micans</i> group	False devil spiny ants	<i>Myrma</i> -like petiole
<i>P. patiens</i> group	Toothed spiny ants	Propodeum with teeth rather than spines
<i>P. schwiedlandi</i> group	Desert spiny ants	Major group in arid zone
<i>P. sidnica</i> group	Antarctic spiny ants	Distribution centred on the cool-temperate zone
subgenus <i>Cyrtomyrma</i>	Dome-backed spiny ants	Trunk dome-shaped
subgenus <i>Chariomyrma</i>	Savanna spiny ants	Most species occur in monsoonal zone
subgenus <i>Hagiomyrma</i>	Elegant spiny ants	Elegant appearance
subgenus <i>Hedomyrma</i>	Superb spiny ants	Superb appearance
subgenus <i>Myrma</i>	Devil spiny ants	Pitchfork-like petiole
subgenus <i>Myrmhopla</i>	Topless spiny ants	In most species, trunk without a distinct dorsal face
subgenus <i>Myrmothrinax</i>	Treble spiny ants	Petiole with three spines
subgenus <i>Polyrhachis</i>	Hooked spiny ants	Massive, hook-like spines
<i>Prolasius</i>	Mistral ants	Characteristic of cold habitats
<i>P. bruneus</i> group	Brown mistral ants	Colour brownish
<i>P. nitidissimus</i> group	Black mistral ants	Colour black
<i>P. pallidus</i> group	Yellow mistral ants	Colour yellowish
<i>Pseudonotoncus</i>	Spiny epaulet ants	<i>Notoncus</i> -like, but with propodeal and petiolar spines
<i>Stigmacros</i>	Snuggle-pot ants	Small, 'cute'-looking and uniquely Australian
subgenus <i>Campostigmacros</i>	Flat snuggle-pot ants	Trunk dorsally flattened
subgenus <i>Chariostigmacros</i>	Speckled snuggle-pot ants	Often densely punctate
subgenus <i>Cyrtostigmacros</i>	Bumpy snuggle-pot ants	Conspicuous metanotal tubercles
subgenus <i>Hagiostigmacros</i>	Spiny snuggle-pot ants	Prominent propodeal and petiolar spines
subgenus <i>Stigmacros</i>	Baby snuggle-pot ants	Smallest species
Subfamily Leptanillinae		
<i>Leptanilla</i>	Phantom army ants	Subterranean, army ant-like species, with several known only from alates collected at lights
Subfamily Myrmeciinae		
<i>Myrmecia</i>	Bull ants	Established common name (Ogata & Taylor 1991)
<i>M. aberrans</i> group	Wide-jawed bull ants	Mandibles broadly triangular
<i>M. gulosa</i> group	Giant bull ants	Extremely large species
<i>M. mandibularis</i> group	Toothless bull ants	Shaft of mandibles without teeth
<i>M. pilosula</i> group	Jumping jacks	Established common name, because of distinctive jumping motion
<i>M. tepperi</i> group	Buck-toothed bull ants	Asymmetrical mandibular teeth
<i>M. urens</i> group	Baby bull ants	Smallest of all <i>Myrmecia</i>
Subfamily Myrmicinae		
<i>Adlerzia</i>	Thumbelina ants	'Thumb print' sculpturing on pronotal dorsum
<i>Aphaenogaster</i>	Funnel ants	Established common name; nest entrances with funnel-like craters
<i>A. barbigula</i> group	Desert funnel ants	Occurring in southern semi-arid zone
<i>A. longiceps</i> group	Forest funnel ants	Occurring in wetter habitats
<i>Colobostruma</i>	Fierce gremlin ants	Along with the related dacetines <i>Epopostruma</i> and <i>Mesostruma</i> , having a peculiar 'alien'-like appearance. Species of <i>Colobostruma</i> have a rather fierce expression
<i>Crematogaster</i>	Valentine ants	Heart-shaped gaster
<i>C. laeviceps</i> group	Common valentine ants	Most common species
<i>C. queenslandica</i> group	Little valentine ants	Smallest species
<i>Epopostruma</i>	Snappy gremlin ants	See <i>Colobostruma</i> ; elongate, trap-jaw mandibles
<i>Lordomyrma</i>	Royal ants	Derived from 'Lord', and morphologically deserving of such a title!

Scientific name	Common name	Explanation
<i>Meranoplus</i>	Shield ants	Dorsal surface of trunk expanded to form a shield-like plate
<i>M. dimidiatus</i> group	Box shield ants	Trunk box-like, with dorsal flanges feebly developed
<i>M. diversus</i> group	Harvester shield ants	Specialist granivores
<i>M. fenestratus</i> group	Holy shield ants	Dorsal flanges with translucent 'windows'
<i>M. froggatti</i> group	False turtle ants	Apparently related to <i>testudineus</i> group, but with flanges not so developed
<i>M. hirsutus</i> group	Jungle shield ants	Major group of tropical rainforest
<i>M. mjobergi</i> group	Chocolate shield ants	Integument invariably dark-brown and smooth
<i>M. testudineus</i> group	Turtle ants	Dorsal flanges remarkably extensive
<i>Mesostruma</i>	Solemn gremlin ants	See <i>Colobostruma</i> ; solemn expression
<i>Metapone</i>	Termite-gallery ants	Highly specialised to live in termite galleries (Taylor 1991)
<i>Monomorium</i>	Mono ants	Derived from genus name
<i>M. bifidum</i> group	Northern fanged mono ants	Clypeus with prominent projections; restricted to north-western Australia
<i>M. carinatum</i> group	Angled mono ants	Trunk often with distinct dorsal and lateral faces
<i>M. insolescens</i> group	Monsoonal mono ants	Restricted to the monsoonal zone
<i>M. laeve</i> group	Yellow mono ants	Colour yellowish
<i>M. longiceps</i> group	Mallee mono ants	Characteristic of mallee habitats of southern semi-arid zone
<i>M. nigrius</i> group	Black mono ants	Colour blackish
<i>M. fieldi</i>	Hairy black mono ant	Hairs unusually dense and long
<i>M. nigrius</i>	Little black mono ant	Very small
<i>M. rothsteini</i> group	Smiling mono ants	Clypeal margin sinuate, giving it a smiling appearance
<i>M. whitei</i> group	Southern fanged mono ants	Clypeus with prominent projections; restricted to semi-arid southern Australia
<i>Orectognathus</i>	Goblin ants	Morphologically bizarre dacetines
<i>Pheidole</i>	Big-headed ants	Major workers with disproportionately large heads
<i>P. hartmeyri</i> group	Harvester big-headed ants	Large, specialist granivores of southern arid zone
<i>P. impressiceps</i>	Giant big-headed ant	Very large size
<i>P. longiceps</i> group	Knobbed big-headed ants	Pronotal shoulders with tubercles
<i>P. mjobergi</i> group	Savanna big-headed ants	Major group in monsoonal region
<i>P. group A</i> (Andersen 2000)	Speckled big-headed ants	Head densely punctate
<i>Podomyrma</i>	Muscleman tree-ants	Arboreal ants, with swollen femora that are reminiscent of 'muscle-man' biceps
<i>P. adalaidae</i>	Desert muscleman tree-ant	Only species in central Australia
<i>Pristomyrmex</i>	Spiny jungle ants	With pronotal and propodeal spines; restricted to rainforest
<i>Pyramica</i>	Detritus ants	As in the related <i>Strumigenys</i> , tiny, cryptic dacetines with the appearance of detritus
<i>Solenopsis</i>	Thief ants	Established common name for the only sub-genus (<i>Diplorhoptrum</i>) native to Australia; known to steal food from nests of other ants (Shattuck 1999)
<i>Strumigenys</i>	Snappy detritus ants	See <i>Pyramica</i> ; elongate, trap-jaw mandibles
<i>Tetramorium</i>	Pennant ants	Pennant-like appendage on sting
<i>T. impressum</i> group	Impressive pennant ants	From species-group name
<i>T. laticephalum</i> group	Harvester pennant ants	Seed-harvesters
<i>T. sjostedti</i> group	Giant pennant ants	Largest of Australian <i>Tetramorium</i>
<i>T. spininode</i> group	Royal pennant ants	Described as the 'most spectacular' of the world's <i>Tetramorium</i> (Bolton 1977); gaster with a crown-like flange
<i>T. striolatum</i> group	Common pennant ants	Australia's most common species-group
Subfamily Nothomyrmecinae		
<i>Nothomyrmecia macrops</i>	Dinosaur ant	Established common name, as considered a 'living fossil' (Taylor 1978)
Subfamily Ponerinae		
<i>Amblyopone</i>	Michelin ants	'Fat-waisted' (petiole with broad attachment to gaster)

Scientific name	Common name	Explanation
<i>A. australis</i>	Southern michelin ant	Most conspicuous species in southern Australia
<i>Anochetus</i>	Lesser snappy ants	Trap-jaw mandibles (as in related but larger <i>Odontomachus</i>)
<i>Bothroponera</i>	Foaming ants	Venom with foaming substance
<i>B. dentata</i> group	Toothed foaming ants	Dorso-posterior margin of petiole serially dentate
<i>B. excavata</i> group	Eared foaming ants	Dorso-posterior margin of petiole with lateral projections
<i>B. porcata</i> group	Striped foaming ants	First gastric segment conspicuously striate
<i>B. sublaevis</i> group	Smooth foaming ants	Without gastric sculpture
<i>Diacamma</i>	Bladder ants	Possessing unique, bladder-like glands that regulate reproductive dominance (Peeters & Higashi 1989)
<i>D. australe</i>	Australian bladder ant	Endemic to Australia
<i>D. levis</i>	Smooth bladder ant	Less heavily sculptured than <i>D. australe</i>
<i>Discothyrea</i>	Clubbed trigger ants	Along with <i>Proceratium</i> , having a peculiarly reflexed, trigger-like gaster; antennal club massively swollen
<i>Heteroponera</i>	False pony ants	Related to <i>Rhytidoponera</i>
<i>Hypoponera</i>	Crypt ants	Subterranean, cryptic habits
<i>Leptogenys</i>	Genial killer ants	Specialist predators; 'genial' derived from 'genys'
<i>Odontomachus</i>	Giant snappy ants	See <i>Anochetus</i>
<i>Platythyrea</i>	Broad-nosed killer ants	Specialist predators with widely spaced frontal carinae
<i>P. parallela</i> group	Northern broad-nosed killer ants	Tropical distribution
<i>P. turneri</i> group	Southern broad-nosed killer ants	Southern distribution
<i>Onychomyrma</i>	False army ants	Exhibit army ant-like behaviour
<i>Ponera</i>	Blind crypt ants	Closely related to <i>Hypoponera</i> , but eyes usually absent
<i>Proceratium</i>	Trigger ants	See <i>Discothyrea</i>
<i>Rhytidoponera</i>	Pony ants	Genus name sounds like 'ride a pony'
<i>R. araneoides</i> group	Spider pony ants	From species-group name
<i>R. aspera</i> group	Rough blue pony ants	With strikingly blue iridescence; 'rough' from species-group name
<i>R. aurata</i> group	Lesser-horned pony ants	Occipital corners produced into sharp angles (see related <i>taurus</i> group)
<i>R. convexa</i> group	Convex pony ants	From species-group name
<i>R. impressa</i> group	Blue pony ants	Most species with strikingly blue iridescence
<i>R. mayri</i> group	Titan pony ants	Extremely large species
<i>R. metallica</i> group	Metallic pony ants	From species-group name
<i>R. punctata</i> group	Speckled pony ants	Integument punctate
<i>R. reticulata</i> group	Netted pony ants	From species-group name
<i>R. taurus</i> group	Greater-horned pony ants	Occipital corners produced into horn-like projections (see related <i>aurata</i> group)
<i>R. tenuis</i> group	Delicate pony ants	Body small and slim
<i>R. turneri</i> group	Shark-finned pony ants	Propodeum reflexed
<i>R. tyloxys</i> group	Killer pony ants	Appear to be specialist predators
Subfamily Pseudomyrmecinae		
<i>Tetraponera</i>	Black tree ants	Black, arboreal ants
<i>T. nitida</i>	Toothed black tree-ant	Small ventral teeth on petiole
<i>T. punctulata</i>	Savanna black tree-ant	Occurs throughout monsoonal Australia