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## BLACK HOUSE ANT

*Hypoclinea glabra* , *Iridomyrmex glaber*

Length 2.0 to 2.5 mm; antennae 12-segmented; mandibles with 8 teeth and 1 or 2 denticles; petiolar scale rounded and forming an even arch dorsally; colour shiny black or brown.



Only a few details of the biology of this species are known. *O. glaber* is well adapted for living in open or semi-open habitats in this country, nesting under stones or in dry fallen logs. Often found in domestic gardens; occasionally workers enter houses. They form conspicuous files on tree trunks in their search for honeydew and small insects and may nest above ground, having often been seen trailing into holes in trees, fenceposts and flax flower stems .

Since its establishment, *O. glaber* has spread to most parts of the North Island and to urban Nelson. It has been found in both urban and rural areas. It seems to show a strong preference for exploiting the margin between forest and scrub, judging by the large number of samples of the ant recorded in this habitat.

Do not sting. In Australia, the genus is reported as "often foraging in houses where they show a preference for fluids and sweets". Not noted as a major house pest in New Zealand, although commonly collected in urban gardens and occasionally from houses. As it is an arboreal species it will likely occupy very different habitats from native ant species, none of which nest above the ground.