



The geography of ant morphology: within colony and across populations

Author(s): Jean-Philippe Lessard, Jean-Philippe Lessard

Institution(s): Department of Biology, Concordia University, Montreal, Canada ; Department of Biology, Concordia University, Montreal, Canada

What drives geographic variation in the morphology of animals? This has been a persisting question in biogeography. Some general patterns have emerged over the years revealing that body size, among other traits, often vary systematically along climatic gradients. In social insects like ants, morphology varies within and between castes, within and between colonies as well as within and between populations. As such, answering the question of what determines geographic variation in morphology in ants is quite complex. It is likely that developmental pathways, resource availability, the abiotic environment as well as the evolutionary history of lineages all play a role. Here, I will present geographic patterns of intra-colonial and intra-specific variation in ant morphology and try to provide some explanation as to how they might arise.