

# 21º CONFERENCIA INTERNACIONAL SOBRE PALMA DE ACEITE

21th International Oil Palm Conference

# Avances en el control de hormigas cortadoras de hojas: Mitos y realidades



James Montoya-Lerma, PhD.

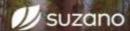
Universidad del Valle





### CHAMADA DE IN VAÇÃO ABERTA

Sanidade & Proteção Florestal



Queremos conhecer a sua solução inovadora e sustentável para o eucalipto no tema:

#### CONTROLE DE FORMIGAS CORTADEIRAS

#### TECNOLOGIAS ESPERADAS:

#### Controle:

Microbiologia

| Controle biológico (óleo essencial, repelência, bioisca, microarganismo)

I Controle guímico

| Biologia Molecular

#### QUEM PODE INOVAR COM a GENTE?

Startups e empresas (com produtos ou soluções aplicáveis)

Universidades e instituições de pesquisa



#### se LIGO!

Soluções de outros setores — como agricultura, meio ambiente, biotecnologia ou tecnologias inteligentes — são bem vindas, desde que passam ser adoptadas, cam ajustes ou prototipagem, para o Se sua ideia surgiu em outro setor, mas pode gerar impacto nas florestas. mostre pra gente!

#### Monitoramento:

| Automação

Sensoriamento Remoto

l Robótica

Big data

Mecatrónica

I IA (machine learning)

Softwares

Outras

#### o que nós vamos avaliar?

- Inovação e originalidade
- Viabilidade técnica e econômica
- · Escalabilidade
- · Impacto ambiental
- Grau de maturidade da solução (ideia, protótipo, piloto, mercado)

#### POR QUE PARTICIPAR?

- Financiamento ou incubação de projetos-piloto
- Implementação em áreas piloto

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Avaliação das ote 31/10/25

\*A(s) proposta(s) selecionadas seguirão para etapas contratuais e execução da

#### **IMPORTANTE:**

ainda tem dúvidas?

Suzano

chamadatecnica@suzano.com.br

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Atta –
15 spp.
Acromyrmex 29 spp.
Amoimyrmex 3 spp.

Fernández et al. 2015; Cardoso & Sandoval, 2020

### Atta

- Nidos grandes
- Población: Millones de hormigas por nido
- Corta árboles de gran porte





- Nidos pequeños
- Población: Miles de hormigas por nido
- Corta pastos



Acromyrmex

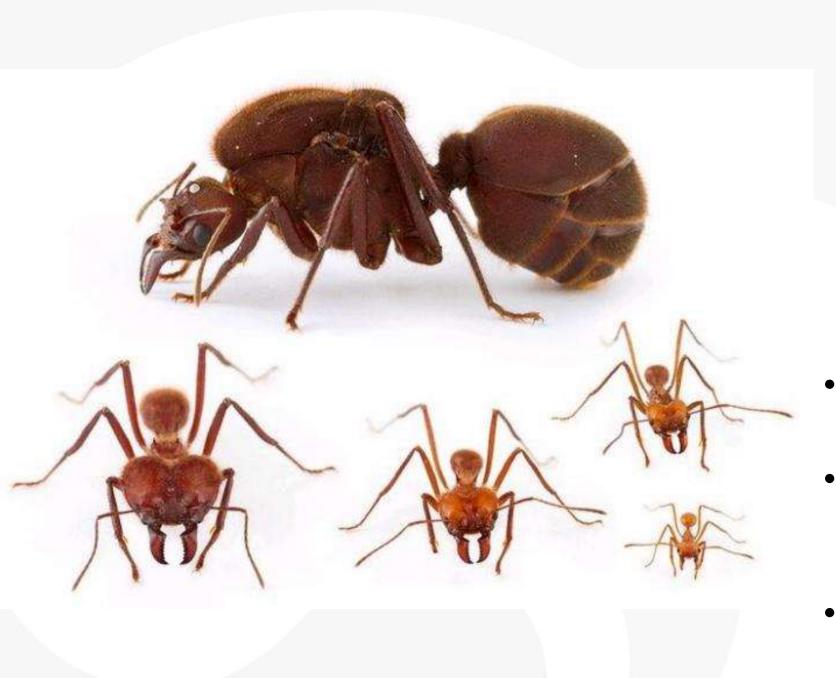


Photo: Alex Wild



### Organización Social

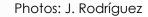
- 1 reina (Atta) o varias (Acromyrmex)
- Castas de diferentes tamaños, con diferentes tareas
- Machos mueren tras la cópula

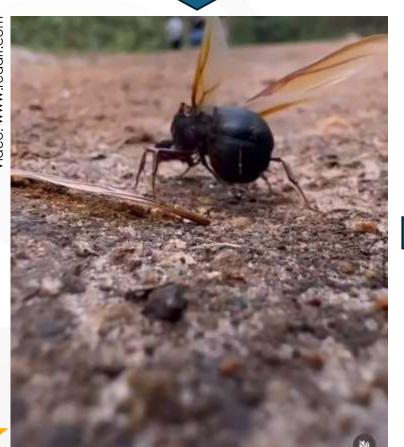
Primeros tres meses, los hormigueros son ideales para el control mecánico

Después del apareamiento la reina es blanco "fácil" de enemigos naturales

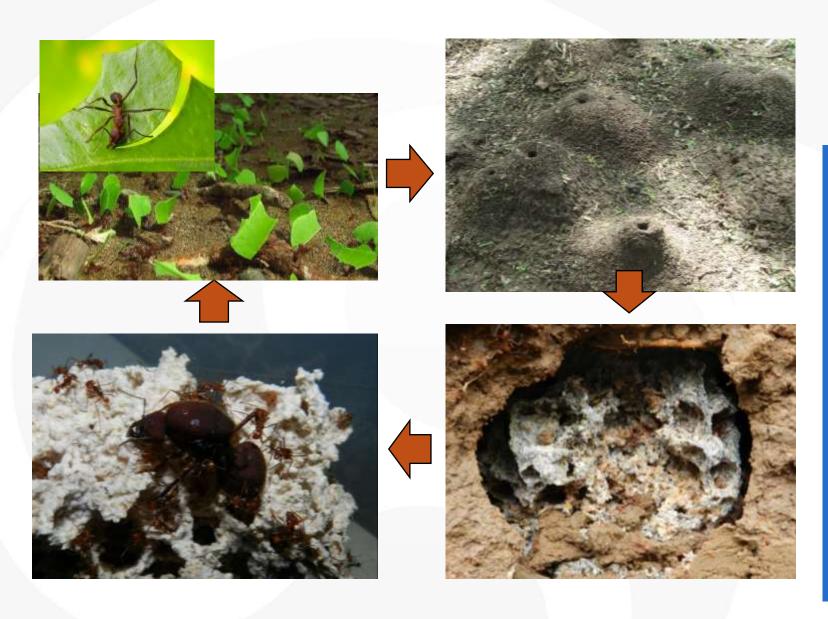














Cortan material vegetal para cultivar su ancestral hongo mutualista Leucoagaricus gongylophorus

Las hormigas son importantes plagas agrícolas, forestales y Urbanas (Montoya-Lerma et al., 2024)

- Consumo entre 70 y 500 kg de material vegetal por nido, durante UN año (Correa et al., 2016)
- Densidades superiores a 30 nidos/ha, reducen en más de 50% producción em plantios de Pinus caribaea, (Hernández e Jaffé, 1995).









# Estrategias de control







Control

 Consumo de reinas después del vuelo nupcial



- Uso de material orgánico en descomposición para alterar el microambiente al interior del hormiguero
- Levante de composteras sobre hormigueros

Photos: Carolina Giraldo









Facultad de Ciencias Naturales y Exactas Universidad del Valle



COMPOSTING TO CONTROL THE LEAF-CUTTING ANT ATTA CEPHALOTES L. (HYMENOPTERA: FORMICIDAE)







## Excavación de hormigueros

Apertura de hormigueros para extraer la reina y destruir cámaras de cultivo del hongo





# Control físico







### Control físico

Uso de barreras para evitar la defoliación de plantas por parte de obreras





Control biológico











Photos: J. Rodriguez



Parasitoides

### Microrganismos Entomopatogénicos **Antagonistas** Hongo mutualista y **Hormigas** microrganismos asociados



# Control biológico

Uso de microrganismos para el control de poblaciones de hormigas

Microrganismo	Función	acción
Metarhizium anisopliae	Entomopatógeno	Atacan a obreras, disminuye su población. Pueden atacar a reinas también
Beauveria bassiana	Entomopatógeno	
Aspergillus ochraceus	Entomopatógeno	
Conidiobolus Iunulus	Entomopatógeno	
Purpureocillium lilacinum	Entomopatógeno	
Trichoderma spp.	Antagonista	Atacan al hongo mutualista
Escovopsis spp.	Antagonista	



Photos: J. Rodriguez



Entomopatógenos

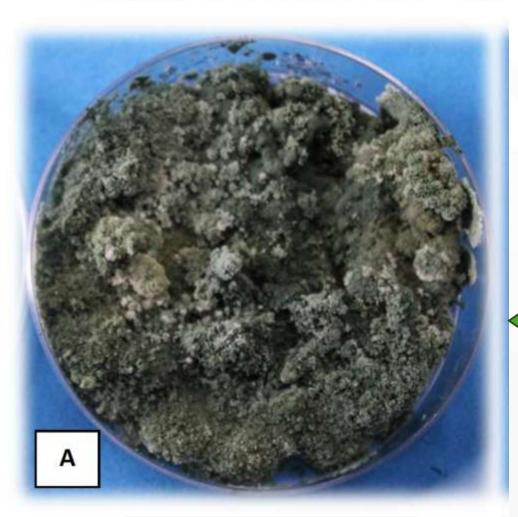


# Photo: Thalles Matoso

### BIOLOGICAL CONTROL IN LEAF-CUTTING ANTS, Atta sexdens (HYMENOPTERA: FORMICIDAE), USING PATHOGENIC FUNGI

Tarcísio Marcos Macedo Mota Filho<sup>2\*</sup>, Luis Eduardo Pontes Stefanelli<sup>2</sup>, Roberto da Silva Camargo<sup>3</sup>, Carlos Alberto Oliveira de Matos<sup>4</sup> and Luiz Carlos Forti<sup>5</sup>





### **Antagonistas**

Hongo mutualista
es el talón de
Aquiles de la
colonia. Aquí está
expuesto a
Trichoderma sp.
(sin obreras, es
liquidado por
Escovopsis)

Photo: Alex Wild

### Bacterial extracts for the control of *Atta cephalotes* (Hymenoptera: Formicidae) and its symbiotic fungus *Leucoagaricus gongylophorus* (Agaricales: Agaricaceae)

Miguel Uribe Londoño1, Magally Romero-Tabarez1,2, Adriana Ortiz-Reyes1,2,\*

- Grupo de Investigación en Sustancias Activas y Biotecnología (SaBio), Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 050034 Medellín, Colombia; miguribelon@unal.edu.co
- Escuela de Biociencias, Facultad de Ciencias, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Medellín; mromerota@unal.edu.co, adortizr@unal.edu.co
  - \* Correspondence

Abstract. Introduction: Leaf-cutting ants Atta cephalotes (Linnaeus) are one of the main insect pests in Latin America; these ants (along with Acromyrmex spp.) present a unique characteristic amongst ants, - the cultivation of the Leucoagaricus gongylophorus Möller (Singer) fungus as a food source. They belong to tribe Attini and build nests in underground chambers which are interconnected by pathways. These voracious ants have attacked over 45 crop fields in Colombia. The main control method has been the use of synthetic chemical products; however, alternative control measures must be established. One alternative that has a great potential are bacteria and their secondary metabolites. Objective: The aim of this study was to evaluate the insecticidal and antifungal effect of bacterial extracts on major worker A. cephalotes ants and the L. gongylophorus fungus. Methods: A total of 118 extracts produced by the same number of bacteria were evaluated. Among the strains that produced the active extracts were: Serratia sp., Xenorhabdus nematophila, Photorhabdus sp., and Bacillus thuringiensis. From each bacterium, extracts were prepared to test both insecticidal and repellent activity on worker ants, also to evaluate growth inhibition assays on L. gongylophorus. Results: Seventeen extracts showed insecticidal activity upon contact, 13 by ingestion, while 8 showed antifungal activity that was statistically significant. In total, 23 bacterial extracts exhibited some type of activity to control Atta cephalotes. Conclusions: The results show 23 bacterial extracts with some type of activity to control A. cephalotes, which exposes the potential there is to explore bacteria, especially entomopathogenic bacteria, which may contain interesting genes for the biological control of insects.

Key words: antifungal bioassay; bacteria; contact toxicity; ingestion bioassay; leaf-cutting ants.



El efecto nocivo de las bacterias Serratia sp. Xenorhadus nemathophila, B. thuringiensis abre las puertas para futuras aplicaciones

### Control biológico



### Ventajas

- Especificidad
- Cero contaminación ambiental
- Actividad complementaria a otras estrategias de control

### Desventajas

- Las obreras aprenden a reconocer agentes tóxicos
- La eficiencia depende si las obreras aceptan los cebos
- Los cebos no son depositados en las cámaras de cría
- Tiempo de acción prologando, permite reacción del organismo





### Control químico



Video: J. Rodriguez



Cebos tóxicos son la manera más práctica, operativa y económica de control



### Termo nebulización

### Técnica muy eficiente

Atomiza un insecticida, mezclado con diesel o un aceite mineral, con una termonebulizadora

Diminución del forrajeo en pocos días





### Natural Enemies of *Atta vollenweideri* (Hymenoptera: Formicidae) Leaf-Cutter Ants Negatively Affected by Synthetic Pesticides, Chlorpyrifos and Fipronil

ANDREA C. GUILLADE<sup>1</sup> AND PATRICIA J. FOLGARAIT

Departamento de Ciencia y Tecnología, Universidad Nacional de Quilmes, Roque Sáenz Peña 352, Bernal BXD1876, Buenos Aires, Argentina

### Brain anomalies in children exposed prenatally to a common organophosphate pesticide

Virginia A. Rauh<sup>a,b,1</sup>, Frederica P. Perera<sup>b,c</sup>, Megan K. Horton<sup>b,d</sup>, Robin M. Whyatt<sup>b,c</sup>, Ravi Bansal<sup>e</sup>, Xuejun Hao<sup>e</sup>, Jun Liu<sup>e</sup>, Dana Boyd Barr<sup>f</sup>, Theodore A. Slotkin<sup>g</sup>, and Bradley S. Peterson<sup>e,h</sup>

Environ Sci Pollut Res DOI 10.1007/s11356-016-7729-3



#### RESEARCH ARTICLE

### Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) pesticide policy and integrated pest management in certified tropical plantations

Pedro Guilherme Lemes <sup>1</sup> · José Cola Zanuncio <sup>2</sup> · José Eduardo Serrão <sup>3</sup> · Simon A. Lawson <sup>4</sup>



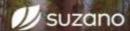
Fipronil y sulfluramidas considerados tóxicos a mamíferos y persistentes en el entorno según La Convención de Estocolmo.

**Abolidos** por algunos esquemas de certificación forestal



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# ¿ y cómo lo hacen? ¿Por qué son tan difíciles de controlar?



### Comportamiento higiénico



The role of grooming in regulating biomass growth of ants and symbiotic fungi under entomopathogenic fungal infection: experiments and mathematical modelling

Isabella Bueno<sup>10</sup>, João Vitor Mendes Ferraz de Toledo<sup>10</sup>, Lucas Santos Canuto<sup>10</sup>, Wesley Augusto Conde Godoy<sup>10</sup>

1 Laboratory of Ecology and Forest Entomology, Department of Entomology and Acarology, Luiz de Queiroz College of Agriculture, University of São Paulo, Av Pádua Dias, 11, São Judas, Piracicaba, São Paulo, Brazil

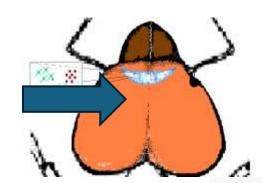
Esto permite que se active un sistema de alarma/defensa de forma intensiva en el nido

Las hormigas retiran esporas de su cuerpo así como el de sus compañeras y del hongo mutualista

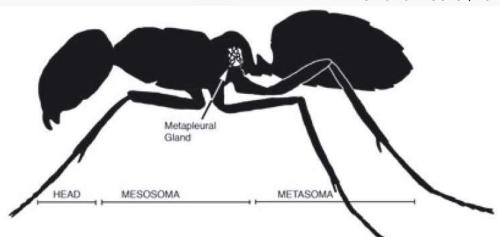
### Las hormigas poseen un sistema de detección sensorial en sus antenas







Poseen un bolsillo infrabucal donde guardan las partículas contaminantes







Proc. R. Soc. B (2012) 279, 4215–4222 doi:10.1098/rspb.2012.1458 Published online 22 August 2012



### Glándula Metapleural

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY

Proc. R. Soc. B (2006) 273, 1689–1695 doi:10.1098/rspb.2006.3492 Published online 15 March 2006

### Regulation and specificity of antifungal metapleural gland secretion in leaf-cutting ants

Sze Huei Yek<sup>1,\*</sup>, David R. Nash<sup>1</sup>, Annette B. Jensen<sup>2</sup> and Jacobus J. Boomsma<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Biology, Centre for Social Evolution, University of Copenhagen, Universitetsparken 15, 2100 Copenhagen, Denmark

<sup>2</sup>Department of Agriculture and Ecology, Centre for Social Evolution, University of Copenhagen, Thorvaldsensvej 40, 1871 Frederiksberg, Denmark

Ants have paired metapleural glands (MGs) to produce secretions for prophylactic hygiene. These exocrine glands are particularly well developed in leaf-cutting ants, but whether the ants can actively regulate MG secretion is unknown. In a set of controlled experiments using conidia of five fungi, we show that the ants adjust the amount of MG secretion to the virulence of the fungus with which they are infected. We further applied fixed volumes of MG secretion of ants challenged with constant conidia doses to agar mats of the same fungal species. This showed that inhibition halos were significantly larger for ants challenged with virulent and mild pathogens/weeds than for controls and Escovopsis-challenged ants. We conclude that the MG defence system of leaf-cutting ants has characteristics reminiscent of an additional cuticular immune system, with specific and non-specific components, of which some are constitutive and others induced.

Keywords: prophylactic hygiene; pathogens; virulence; induced and constitutive immunity

### Active use of the metapleural glands by ants in controlling fungal infection

Hermógenes Fernández-Marín<sup>1,4</sup>, Jess K. Zimmerman<sup>2</sup>, Stephen A. Rehner<sup>3</sup> and William T. Wcislo<sup>4,\*</sup>

Department of Biology, University of Puerto Rico, PO Box 23360, San Juan, PR 00931, USA
Institute for Tropical Ecosystem Studies, University of Puerto Rico at Rio Piedras, PO Box 21910, San Juan, PR 00931-1910, USA

<sup>3</sup>Insect Biocontrol Laboratory, USDA/ARS, BARC-West, Building 011A, Room 214, Beltsville, MD 20705-2350, USA
<sup>4</sup>Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, Apartado 0843-03092, Ancón, República de Panamá

Insect societies face constant challenges from disease agents. Ants deploy diverse antimicrobial compounds against pathogens and the key sources are metapleural glands (MGs). Are MG products passively secreted and used indiscriminately or are they selectively used when ants are challenged by pathogens? In 26 species from five subfamilies, ants use foreleg movements to precisely groom the MG opening. In the absence of experimental infection, MG grooming rates are low and workers groom themselves after contacting the MGs. The derived leaf-cutter ants (Atta and Acromyrmex) also groom their fungal gardens, substrata (leaves), queens and nest-mates after MG grooming. Atta respond to a challenge by fungal conidia by increasing the rate of MG grooming, but do not do so when an inert powder is applied. This increase occurs in the first hour after a potential infection, after which it returns to baseline levels. Ants with open MGs produce more infrabuccal pellets (IP) than ants with sealed MGs and conidia within pellets from the former are less likely to germinate. Thus, ants selectively groom their MGs when disease agents are present, suggesting that they also selectively use their MG secretions, which has important implications for understanding the evolution of hygienic behaviour in social groups.

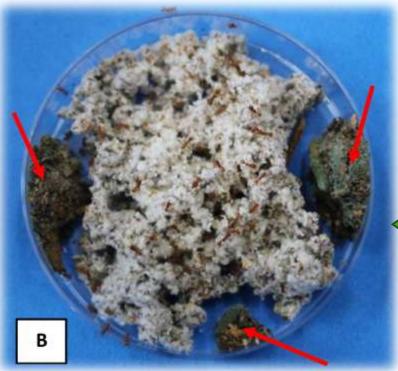
Keywords: metapleural gland; pathogens; antibiotics; hygiene; social evolution; ants

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Tarcísio Marcos Macedo Mota Filho<sup>2\*</sup>, Luis Eduardo Pontes Stefanelli<sup>2</sup>, Roberto da Silva Camargo<sup>3</sup>, Carlos Alberto Oliveira de Matos<sup>4</sup> and Luiz Carlos Forti<sup>5</sup>







A. Hongo
mutualista
expuesto a
Trichoderma sp.
(sin obreras). B.
con obreras

Photo: Alex Wild

Videos: Dreyer et al. 2025





Abstract



Un experimento revolucionario: descubren que las hormigas vencen a los humanos en un reto de inteligencia colectiva, demostrando que cooperan mucho mejor que nosotros... incluso sin poder comunicarse

Christian Pérez | Eugenio M. Fernández Aguilar

conditioning to suitable plants, but harmful resources induced delayed rejection and decreased preference, confirming the occurrence of aversive conditioning. Safe resources impregnated with odours from harmful resources were rejected by the ants, indicating that olfactory learning participates in the plant selection process. Harmful resources induced changes in the chemical profile of symbiotic fungi and caused a delayed rejection behaviour in worker ants. Odours of harmful plants are linked to food rejection behaviour through associative learning and inhibit future collection of these plants. Plant selection in *A. sexdens* seems to be based on recognition of resources that are harmful to symbiotic fungi rather than on recognition of adequate resources.

Las obreras evitan colectar material (vegetal o cebos) cuando asociados con cambios en el hongo mutualista

## Antibiosis: microbiota asociada



Contents lists available at SciVerse ScienceDirect

Brain, Behavior, and Immunity

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/ybrbi



Ectosymbionts and immunity in the leaf-cutting ant Acromyrmex subterraneus subterraneus

Danival José de Souza a,\*, Alain Lenoir c, Maria Catarina Megumi Kasuya d, Myriam Marques Ramos Ribeiro b, Séverine Devers c, Joel da Cruz Couceiro b, Terezinha Maria Castro Della Lucia b



Biol. Lett. (2012) 8, 461–464 doi:10.1098/rsbl.2011.0963 Published online 30 November 2011

Pathogen biology

Symbiotic bacteria
on the cuticle of the leafcutting ant Acromyrmex
subterraneus subterraneus
protect workers from attack
by entomopathogenic
fungi

Thalles C. Mattoso, Denise D. O. Moreira and Richard I. Samuels\*

Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology, State University of North Fluminense, Campos dos Goytacazes, Rio de Janeiro 28013-602, Brazil \*Author for correspondence (richardiansamuels@gmail.com).



Acromymex octospinosus and Actinomyces bactéria. Photo: Alex Wild.

### Physiological Entomology:

How Insects Work - Linking Genotype to Phenotype



Original Article

Bacterial microbiota associated with the leaf-cutting ant Atta cephalotes (Hymenoptera: Myrmicinae): Dynamics during development and potential role in defence

Sandra Milena Valencia-Giraldo ➡, Arturo Gutiérrez-Urrego, Andrea Niño-Castro, Andrea López-Peña, James Montoya-Lerma

### Actinomycetes inhibit filamentous fungi from the cuticle of Acromyrmex leafcutter ants

Rômulo Augusto Cotta Dângelo<sup>1</sup>, Danival José de Souza<sup>2</sup>, Thais Demarchi Mendes<sup>3</sup>, Joel da Cruz Couceiro<sup>1</sup> and Terezinha Maria Castro Della Lucia<sup>4</sup>

Actinomycetes bacteria associated with antimicrobial properties against Esfungus-growing ants, which denig

produce secondary metabolites with ialized in attacking the gardens of ecause previous studies have used

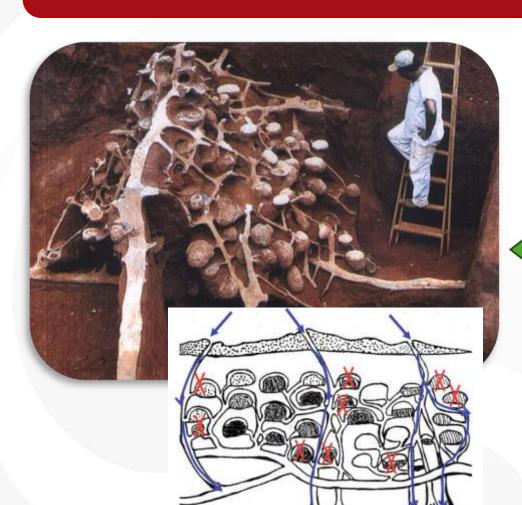
Pseudonocardia y Streptomyces (actinobacterias simbiontes en el exoesqueleto).

Burkholderia (Gram-negativa) asociada al hongo mutualista. El simbionte libera sustancias antibacteriales y antifúngicas de tipo volátil

Se sospecha que muchas levaduras también brindan protección

### Arquitectura del nido





Nest Architecture of Atta laevigata (F. Smith, 1858)

(Hymenoptera: Formicidae)

Aldenise A. Moreira<sup>1</sup>, Luiz Carlos Forti<sup>1\*</sup>, Ana Paula P. Andrade<sup>1</sup>, Maria Aparecida C. Boaretto<sup>2</sup> and Juliane F.S. Lopes<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Socia <sup>2</sup>Dept

### La arquitectura del hormiguero ayuda a controlar las infecciones

- Nidos de Atta hasta 7 m de profundidad y entre 300 y 7000 cámaras
- Más de 7.000 cámaras internas con capacidad entre 0,3 y 51 litros

••••

### Evolución....











Photos: Alex Wild











Un hallazgo sorprende a los científicos: una hormiga pone huevos que dan lugar a dos especies diferentes y desafía las reglas conocidas de la biología

Una hormiga reina ha sido descubierta clonando machos de otra especie para que sus hijas puedan trabajar y sobrevivir, desafiando las leyes de la genética y lo que creíamos saber sobre las especies.

## Hace 8-12 millones de años:







Atta y Acromyrmex "inventaron" la agricultura....



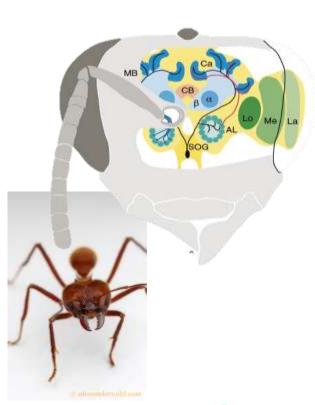
### Grandes desafíos

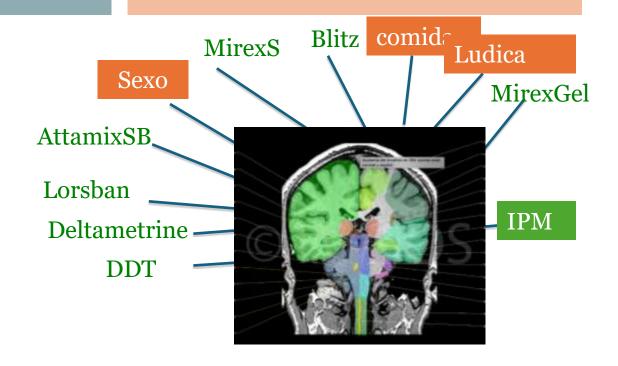


- Baja conversión del conocimiento científico en soluciones tecnológicas, limitan el uso de más productos sustentables.
- Durante mucho tiempo, las compañías forestales enfocaron el control al químico negando el espacio a las alternativas ecológicamente amigables.
- Ahora, dada la prohibición de productos tóxicos, el desarrollo de investigaciones es una necesidad; pero el respaldo financiero es insuficiente o inadecuado.

Cerebro hormiga: 850 k neurópilos com una clara finalidad

Cerebro humano: 100 millones de neuronas .....





**Erradicar!** 





# Grandes desafíos requieren grandes soluciones



- En el control hormigas cortadoras es necesario combinar métodos y es obligatorio el monitoreo continuo.
- Una sola estrategia puede funcionar pero, no por largo tiempo.
- Es necesario diseñar programas de control que involucren más personal que, activamente, revise las áreas donde se encuentren hormigueros.

# Grandes problemas requieren grandes soluciones



- Es crucial considerar tanto el impacto directo en las hormigas como sobre el mutualista (Melo et al. 2020) y los simbiontes (Pinheiro et al. 2025)
- Optimizar detalles técnicos, incluida la formulación, estabilidad y eficacia en campo.
- Garantizar la aplicación y su efectividad (Pinheiro et al. 2025)
- Desarrollo tecnologías (e.g. emulsiones y encapsulamiento) para aumentar la eficiencia y minimizar impactos ambientales (Pinheiro et al. 2025)

## Aceites vegetales



REVIEW ARTICLE

Agricultural and Forest Entomology



## Potential of alternative control of leaf-cutting ants using essential oils: A systematic review

4. This review emphasizes the need to translate scientific knowledge into technological solutions to make alternative products available for the control of LCAs. This is essential to uphold the commitment made under the Stockholm Convention, which seeks to eliminate or restrict the use of Persistent Organic Pollutants.

La revisión enfatiza en la necesidad de transferir este conocimiento en soluciones tecnológicas.



## Feromona de reina







Compuestos cuticulares de reinas (> 1 año) son altamente atrayentes para las obreras.

¿podrían estos compuestos llevar los cebos a la reina? ¿podrían las obreras "pensar" que hay dos reinas y matarlas?





SC Advance

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PAPER

this: RSC Adv., 2025, 15, 4262

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Review

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Bioactive Phyto-Compounds with Antimicrobial Effects Results of a Desk Research Study

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Type Review

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En el mundo está transformando la investigación del control biológico de plagas

Photo: Alex Wild

ΙΑ

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PDAI: A green pesticide molecule design techi high-performance computing and artificial int

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Cheminformatics and artificial intelligence for accelerating agrochemical discovery

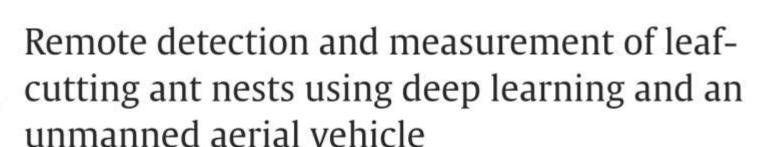
Yannick Djoumbou-Feunang<sup>1\*</sup>, Jeremy Wilmot<sup>2</sup>, John Kinne Pritam Chanda<sup>1</sup>, Pulan Yu<sup>2</sup>, Avery Sader<sup>2</sup>, Max Sharifi<sup>3</sup>,



#### Computers and Electronics in Agriculture

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- Con IA se monitorean remotamente forestales
- Fotografías satelitales o con drones.
- Se define esquema de control apropiado

Diminución de aplicaciones de tóxicos



# Grandes problemas también requieren soluciones simples



