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Poster presentation: P1

Colony demography in the differently coloured leaf nests of *Oecophylla smaragdina* Fabricius collected from the premises of Kelaniya University, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

The leaf nests of the arboreal weaver ant, *Oecophylla smaragdina*, consist of green (Type 1), green & brown (Type 2) and brown (Type 3) leaves. The colony demography in three nests (or subunits) of each colour, collected from *Nephelium lappaceum* L. ("Rambutan"), *Carissa carandas* L. ("Karanda") and *Bauhinia variegata* L. Beneth ("Koboleela") in the premises of University Kelaniya was investigated. Nests were carefully detached, kept in a container and, live individuals and immature stages were counted. Type 1 nests had 9 – 12 vertically oriented leaves and higher number of eggs and larvae, lower number of pupae, more than hundred workers and 8 - 14 winged, yellowish (5 – 8) and greenish (3 – 9) females. Type 2 nests consisted of 9 – 13 horizontally oriented leaves and lower numbers of larvae, higher number of pupae and more than hundred workers. Five to 10 vertically oriented leaves were observed in the Type 3 nests; higher number of eggs and larvae, lower number of pupae and more than hundred workers were only present. Current observations indicated that the colour variation occurred with the aging of leaves is an indication of the presence or absence of secondary reproductive females in the nest.

Key words: Colony structure, nesting biology, ant ecology