

## Comments on a review of "Ants and plants"

The book, "Ants and Plants," so severely attacked in a review by Alan N. Andersen in 1996 (*Australian Journal of Entomology*, vol. 35, p. 200), was applauded, in its French version, by another Australian, Prof. R. C. Buckley, in *Science*. The famous English ant specialist, Barry Bolton, also praised the book in his "Identification guide to the ant genera of the World" (1994). The text of both the French and English versions is the same, except the English version included many new hosts plants from Central America and Southeast Asia.

The nasty review by Andersen refers to Huxley and Cutler (1991, *Ant Plant Interactions*, Oxford University Press, xviii+601 pp.) as a source of more correct information. I contributed to this book, and I was also a delegate to the symposium. My book, in its recent English version, was nicely reviewed in *Antenna*, for the Royal Entomological Society. This shows the inconsistency of Andersen as a reviewer. In French we call these *jeune loups*: "*Lupus querens quem devoret!*" Gotwald's book (1995), on army ants was similarly denounced in a recent review by Donat, Agosti, in the *Journal of the New York Entomological Society*, 103(2): 225-227.) without any serious reasons.

The manuscript of my book was given to the publisher (Backhuys Publisser, Leiden) in 1989, which was four years before *Iridomyrmex* was synonymized under *Philidris*, an item mentioned in Andersen's review. It is not the fault of the

author if the manuscript remained "in press" for eight years. I could not anticipate the changes in nomenclature made in Bolton's catalog and Wilson's books which were not in print at the time. My book is criticized as high priced, but authors are not responsible for the price of European or any other book; I know of many with even higher cost per page. This does not reflect on the scientific value or correctness of a book.

The person responsible for the rewriting of the text was certainly responsible for the occasional poor English, and the page proof was kept out of the hands of the author by the publisher who was unable to print it for such a long time.

"Plant-ants," a term also criticized, is used by Davidson, *et al.* (in several papers, including one published in the *Journal of Chemical Evolution*, 16: 2993-3013, 1990). This term refers to those ants that live on hosts plants, or myrmecophytes, to use a more technical term.

This book has the merit to be the only recent and up-to-date review of the ant-plants known. As once said by a French writer: "It is a strength to have done nothing, but you must not abuse it."

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