



Press Invitation

Thirteen new ant species discovered by HKU Ecologists

March 28, 2019

Monitoring Hong Kong insects can reveal both beautiful and alarming discoveries. Dr Benoit Guénard and his team from the School of Biological Sciences, the University of Hong Kong (HKU) have recently expanded the knowledge on Hong Kong ants by adding 13 new species, of which three are newly described in the world, but five are unwelcome new non-native species. The findings were published in two separate academic journal articles.

The three ant species newly described from Hong Kong are named in reference to its hairy appearance, the locality where it was found (Lantau Island), and the Hong Kong Natural History Society who funded the research respectively.

The finding of five new exotic species in Hong Kong, like the fire ants (*Solenopsis invicta*) in the early 2000's, highlights the regional importance of Hong Kong in importing species. The species are recorded from mainland Asia for the first time. One of them is an urban pest well-known for its ability to enter and establish nests in buildings and has become the species causing the most frequent intervention from pest control companies in some American states.

Another five new ant species recorded in Hong Kong for the first time had been described in other Asian regions.

Dr Benoit Guénard and his team will meet the media to introduce the new ant species and their work on ant biodiversity.

Details are as follows:

Date: April 1, 2019 (Monday)

Photo taking and demonstration by Dr Guénard and team on how to collect ant specimens

Time: 10:30 to 11:15am

Venue: Please gather at the podium of Kadoorie Biological Sciences Building, Main Campus, HKU before moving to the field site

Media briefing

Time: 11:30am

Venue: Room 6N11, Kadoorie Biological Sciences Building, Main Campus, HKU

For media enquiries, please contact Ms Cindy Chan, Assistant Director of Communications of HKU Faculty of Science (tel: 3917 5286/ 6703 0212; email: cindycst@hku.hk).