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Aaron M. Ellison ... [et al.].

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**A FIELD GUIDE
TO THE ANTS OF
NEW ENGLAND**
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NICHOLAS J. GOTELLI
ELIZABETH J. FARNSWORTH
GARY D. ALPERT



Review by Choice Review

This outstanding, well-written reference work is suitable for both students and researchers interested in ants. Introductory material features a brief look at ant natural history, ecology, evolution, parasitism, mimicry, diversity, geographic distribution, and anatomy. Additional sections focus on collecting, illustrating, and photographing ants. The bulk of the text is devoted to identification, including easily observed clues to field identification of specimens to family level (and perhaps genus) as well as detailed criteria required to identify specimens to species level using a binocular microscope. Ellison (Harvard) and colleagues provide both dichotomous and matrix keys for identifying specimens (as well as good instructions for first-time users). The guide is beautifully illustrated, with excellent black-and-white line drawings showing relevant anatomy and full-color plates of all species discussed. A one-to-two-page species-specific discussion of the 140 ant species known to be present in New England includes aspects of natural history, geographic range, habitat, and easily confused look-alikes. The authors distinguish between native and nonnative species, and provide information about IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) status (i.e., vulnerable/threatened). Relatively free of jargon, this book will be of considerable value to amateurs and professionals alike. Summing Up: Highly recommended. All levels/libraries. D. A. Brass independent scholar

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Review by Publisher's Weekly Review

Amateur naturalists seeking a guide for meaningful fieldwork, along with readers curious about the natural world, will welcome this comprehensive and lucid consideration of the over 130 ant species living in or around New England. The authors, biologists and ecologists, successfully convey their sense of wonder at and appreciation for an animal whose complex and fascinating lives are unknown to most, despite their ubiquity.

There are loads of intriguing tidbits. For example, some predators, such as spiders, have evolved to mimic ants' physiognomies so perfectly that trained experts can't always tell them apart. Meanwhile, some ant species enslave others to do their menial work. Ant colonies function as highly social super-organisms: "[t]he single ant you see running across the forest floor or your kitchen counter is in reality a short-lived, specialized extension of the colony itself." There are also simple, step-by-step instructions for observing and collecting ants, along with detailed illustrations and diagrams to assist in classification. Color & b&w illus. (Nov.) (c) Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved.

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