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Male territoriality in African and Caribbean populations of Cardiocondyla venustula

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The genus *Cardiocondyla* is characterized by a pronounced male polyphenism with wingless fighter males with lifelong spermatogenesis and winged disperser males with the limited sperm supply typical for ant males. Winged males have been lost secondarily in several species, and while lethal fighting among wingless males appears to be the ancestral stage, several species have evolved mutually tolerant males. In the phylogeny of *Cardiocondyla*, *C. venustula* occupies an intermediate position between species with fighting males and species with tolerant males. The behavior of its males is therefore of particular interest. Wingless males of *C. venustula* spread out in their natal nests and defend 'territories' against rivals. While injuries are common among males, fighting with lethal outcome is rare. Behavioral observations of 25 *C. venustula* colonies from South Africa (native) and Puerto Rico (introduced) revealed a high intraspecific variability in male behavior. While some colonies had several highly territorial males, males of other colonies did not show any territorial behavior. Similarly, the degree of aggressiveness varied substantially among the observed colonies. Ongoing behavioral and molecular genetic analyses will allow further insights into male competition and might thus help understanding the evolution of male mating strategies in *Cardiocondyla*.