

Brittany Enzmann

Title of Project: Gyne investment and implications for colony founding in harvester ants (Genus *Pogonomyrmex*).

My research involves the investigation of colony investment in queen offspring (termed gynes) between several species of *Pogonomyrmex* harvester ants. Specifically, I am interested in colony investment and control over the production of gynes that vary in a type of colony founding strategy called claustrality. This founding strategy (called claustrality) involves the degree to which gynes rely on internal reserves to raise their first brood of workers. Gynes that raise their first workers from solely body reserves are large and require ample investment from their natal colony. Alternatively, gynes that rely partially on reserves (and must also forage during founding) are smaller and may require less investment. I am exploring the colony investment patterns of protein and lipids involved with each strategy, as well as the degree to which colony workers have control over the physiological and behavioral aspects this trait.

I was fortunate to have a VESR grant last year that allowed me to refine my research objectives. I am now a third year Ph.D. student at UCLA in the lab of Dr. Peter Nonacs. I completed my B.A. at Scripps College (Claremont, CA) in 2003 with a major in biology and a minor in Spanish. As an undergraduate, I studied Neotropical bats and gained field experience in Costa Rica and Australia. I love music, to travel, and to be outside in the sun.