

## Red ants devour mosquitoes too

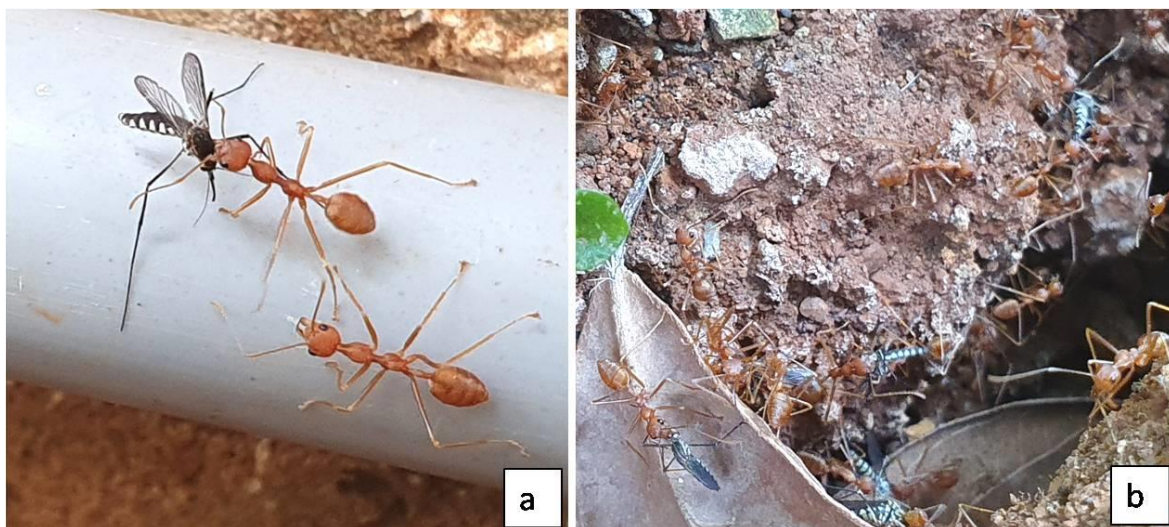
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Mosquitoes pose great threat to human life, by serving as vectors of many life-threatening diseases like malaria, dengue, yellow fever, filariasis, chikungunya and recently zika. Mosquitoes have a number of natural enemies that collectively influence their populations. Biological mosquito control techniques include direct introduction of parasites, pathogens and predators to target mosquitoes (Eldridge, 2008). Many predators including fish, birds, dragon flies, spiders and other organisms play a part in mosquito control by targeting different life cycle stages (Ndava et al., 2018). During an observation in a household site at Puttur, Karnataka, it was noticed that lot of red ants (*Oecophylla smaragdina* F.) were found to move inside the drain holes of septic tank which were also the breeding sites of

mosquitoes. The mosquitoes found in the site belong to the genus, *Armigeres* (Culicidae: Diptera) (Figure 1a and b), which are considered as medically important mosquito species. Movement of red ants carrying these mosquitoes was noticed continuously for a period of 6-8 days. Red ants are commonly present in the study site, where jack trees and mango trees are seen in backyard gardens. There are reports that red ants can control over 50 species of pests on many tropical tree crops and forest trees (Sarwar, 2015; Waage and Greathead, 1988). This interesting observation gives an indication that red ants can also serve as a predator of adult mosquitoes in its breeding sites and further study may aid in devising suitable biocontrol method of mosquitoes.



**Fig. 1. Predation, a. Red ants carrying mosquito b. Red ants moving in and out of the opening at sewage site.**

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