

Environmental Research, Technology Demonstration and Conference Project

ECF Project:	ECF 2020-137
Project Title:	The ants of Hong Kong - A comprehensive revision and molecular database
Principal Investigator:	Dr Benoit Guénard, School of Biological Sciences, The University of Hong Kong
Total Approved Grant:	\$964,660
Duration:	1/12/2021 to 30/11/2024
Project Status/Remarks:	On-going
Project Scope:	<p>Recent studies have shown dramatic decline in insects globally, raising major concerns about their lack of inclusion within conservation programs. Moreover, as several insect groups are used as key bioindicators in tracking global changes, accurate and comprehensive knowledge on these is imperatively needed. Thanks to their sessile lifestyle, abundance and ecological importance, ants have a long history as bioindicators and model organisms to understand changes affecting ecosystems. In parallel, several species are considered among the most harmful invasive species globally, and accurate knowledge on both native and exotic ant fauna is required to develop efficient conservation and management plans.</p> <p>In this project, the ant fauna of Hong Kong will be revised to produce a comprehensive book compiling the taxonomic and ecological information on this fundamental group of organisms. Through new sampling coupled with the study of specimens collected over the past 30 years, this work will offer taxonomic revisions of several key genera, and ultimately provide a comprehensive view of the ants of Hong Kong and the Greater Bay Area. Additionally, a molecular database will be developed to support new species descriptions and to offer later opportunities for researchers to easily use ants as a model group within Hong Kong.</p>
Summary of the Findings/Outcomes:	To be available upon completion of the project