Abstract. Females of Dromius piceus Dejean were observed ovipositing on tree trunks in Ithaca, New York, USA. Behavior prior to oviposition includes an initial phase of searching, followed by scraping of the substrate and bolus formation. The bolus is formed of the bark and algal material that was loosened by scraping and is used to coat the egg.

Résumé. L'auteur a observé des femelles de Dromius piceus Dejean pondant sur des troncs d'arbres à Ithaca dans l'État de New York (États-Unis). Après avoir sélectionné un site de ponte, la femelle gratte la surface du substrat pour agglutiner une boule constituée de fragments d'écorce et d'algues, qu'elle utilise pour recouvrir chaque œuf.

Introduction

Dromius piceus Dejean is a common North American ground beetle that exhibits distinctly arboreal habits (Lindroth 1968, Mahar et al. 1983) and has a trans-American distribution (Bousquet and Larochelle 1993). Although Mahar et al. (1983) added much to the knowledge of adult, larval and pupal phenology for D. piceus, and Casale et al. (1996) similarly treated Dromius meridionalis Dejean, details of the egg stage and behavior leading up to and including oviposition have not been reported.

Aspects of oviposition behavior in many species of Carabidae were reviewed by Thiele (1977). In cases where eggs are encased, soil particles were used to form earthen cells to coat eggs, or a «bowl» was formed in the ground to hold the deposited egg. Even in primarily arboreal species in the Calleidina (Carabidae: Lebiini), known to hang encased eggs from plants by a thread (Larson 1969: 64), the egg coating is made of soil particles. These soil cases are formed by manipulating the soil with the gonocoxae, apex of the abdomen and mandibles.