

BLACK WASPS AT MOOIPLAAS
JOHANN OELOFSE - December 2006

These wasps, common enough on their own but never known to me by name, have been frequenting the flowers of the *Kirkia acuminata* trees on the Mooiplaas koppie for the past couple of weeks. Whenever the day turns really hot they congregate in amazing numbers in shady localities like this spot outside the backdoor of my quarters. The nearest I could come to identifying them is that they may be females of *Batozonellus fuliginosus*.



According to Hendrik Sithole (Research Manager: Invertebrates), the *Batozonellus fuliginosus* belong to spider-hunting wasps, and it is only females that do the hunting because they need spiders to lay their eggs into. They could be frequenting the flowers of *Kirkia acuminata* due to a high chance of catching spiders. In addition, *Batozonellus fuliginosus* usually have diverse habitat and therefore have gathered in the shade to avoid high temperature. You can visit <http://www.museums.org.za/bio/spiderweb/predator.htm> for more information on spider-hunting wasps.