Beyond social species: exploring numerical and social cognition in non-social insects

The project investigates numerical and spatial abilities in non-social insects, with the aim of identifying potential divergences from ecologically related taxa and situating these findings within the broader comparative framework established for social species such as Apis mellifera. By combining controlled behavioral assays with species-appropriate experimental paradigms, the study seeks to clarify how non-social insects encode, discriminate, and use quantitative and spatial information in ecologically relevant contexts.

Research activities will be primarily conducted at the Esapolis Museum, where the candidate will work directly with live insects. This includes maintaining experimental colonies, handling individuals during testing, and ensuring high-quality behavioral data collection. The position requires the development and refinement of experimental setups tailored to different species, as well as the systematic analysis of behavioral responses to uncover underlying cognitive mechanisms.

In addition to laboratory and museum-based research, the project involves a strong third-mission component. The candidate will contribute to public-engagement initiatives, including outreach events, guided activities, and the creation of accessible materials aimed at communicating current research in insect cognition to a broad audience. Previous experience in testing cognitive abilities in insects will be considered a preferential qualification, together with demonstrated competence in handling live invertebrates and in effectively disseminating scientific content to non-specialist publics.