## **Unchanged Fossil Fig Wasp**

Written by Administrator Friday, 19 July 2013 06:20 -

Unchanged fossil fig wasp found, according to reports in ScienceDaily 15 June 2010, and Fossil Science 16 June 2010. Steve Compton, of University of Leeds, and colleagues have identified the oldest known fossil fig wasps among specimens originally collected from the Isle of Wight in the 1920s. The wasps had been incorrectly identified as ants, but the mistake was noted by the late Mikhail Kozlov who was carrying out research at the Natural History Museum, London into the flora and fauna of the Isle of Wight. Compton's team compared the fossils with modern day fig wasps and found they were almost identical. Like their living counterparts the fossil wasps had pollen pockets on their undersides and these contained fig pollen, indicating the wasps were actively pollinating fig trees just as they do today. The fossils have been dated at 34 million years old.

Compton commented: "What makes this fossil fascinating is not just its age, but that it is so similar to the modern species. This means that the complex relationship that exists today between the fig wasps and their host trees developed more than 34 million years ago and has remained unchanged since then." He went on to say: "We believe from molecular evidence that fig wasps and fig trees have been evolving together for over 60 million years. Now we have fossil confirmation that gets us a bit closer to that date. Although we often think of the world as constantly changing, what this fossil gives us is an example of something remaining unchanged for tens of millions of years - something which in biology we call 'stasis'."

The reports also note that figs are tropical fruits and do not grow in the Isle of Wight today.

ScienceDaily, Fossil Science

**Editorial Comment**: The word "stasis" means to stay the same. The fact that the fossil pollen could be identified as fig pollen means figs have stayed the same as well. Therefore, this fossil is not evidence that "fig wasps and fig trees have been evolving together for 60 million years." It is evidence that wasps and figs have reproduced after their kind, just as Genesis says about both plants and animals.

If you want to ponder a bit more – it also means the cold windy un-tropical Isle of Wight, was once "figgily" warm. (Ref. Fruit, climate, insect)

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