

Content Consultant
Dr. Stephen S. Ditchkoff
Professor of Wildlife Ecology and Management
Auburn University
Auburn, Alabama

Photographs ©: cover: Sergey Bezberdy/Caters News Service; 1: Pascal Goetgheluck/Science Source; 2: inkweldodo/Shutterstock, Inc.; 3: inkweldodo/Shutterstock, Inc.; 4: NaturePL/Superstock, Inc.; 5 background: NaturePL/Superstock, Inc.; 5 top inset: Pushish Images/Shutterstock, Inc.; 5 bottom inset: Lisa und Wilfried Bahnmaller/Media Bakery; 7: Leonid Serebrennikov/Superstock, Inc.; 8: Pushish Images/Shutterstock, Inc.; 11: Pascal Goetgheluck/Science Source; 12: Mitsuhiro Imamori/Minden Pictures/National Geographic Creative; 15: National Geographic Creative/Alamy Images; 16: Minden Pictures/Superstock, Inc.; 19: Yon Marsh Natural History/Alamy Images; 20: Encyclopaedia Britannica/UiG/Getty Images; 23: Leftis Papoulakis/Shutterstock, Inc.; 24: inkweldodo/Shutterstock, Inc.; 27: NaturePL/Superstock, Inc.; 28: Minden Pictures/Superstock, Inc.; 31: The Natural History Museum/Alamy Images; 32: juniors/Superstock, Inc.; 35: Minden Pictures/Superstock, Inc.; 36: LucBrousseau/iStockphoto/Thinkstock; 39: Stephen Belcher/Minden Pictures; 40: Lisa und Wilfried Bahnmoller/Media Bakery; 44 background: inkweldodo/Shutterstock, Inc.; 45 background: inkweldodo/Shutterstock, Inc.; 46: Pascal Goetgheluck/Science Source.

Maps by Bob Italiano.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Gregory, Josh, author.

Title: Ants / by Josh Gregory.

Other titles: Nature's children (New York, N.Y.)

Description: New York : Children's Press, an imprint of Scholastic Inc.,

[2017] | Series: Nature's children

Identifiers: LCCN 2015043532 | ISBN 9780531230268 (library

binding : alk. paper) | ISBN 9780531219324 (pbk. : alk. paper)

Subjects: LCSH: Ants--Juvenile literature.

Classification: LCC QL568.F7 G722 | DDC 595.79/6--dc23

LC record available at <http://lccn.loc.gov/2015043532>

No part of this publication may be reproduced in whole or in part, or stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without written permission of the publisher. For information regarding permission, write to Scholastic Inc., Attention: Permissions Department, 557 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.

© 2017 Scholastic Inc.

All rights reserved. Published in 2017 by Children's Press, an imprint of Scholastic Inc.

Printed in China 62

SCHOLASTIC, CHILDREN'S PRESS, and associated logos are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of Scholastic Inc.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 R 26 25 24 23 22 21 20 19 18 17



FACT FILE

Ants

Class Insecta

Order Hymenoptera

Family Formicidae

Genus 283 genera

Species Around 12,000 species

World distribution Worldwide, except for Antarctica, Greenland, Iceland, and certain islands

Habitat Almost all land habitats

Distinctive physical characteristics Range in length from 0.04 to 1.18 inches (1 to 30 millimeters); usually black, brown, red, or yellow; body segmented into head, thorax, and abdomen; thorax and abdomen connected by very narrow waist; antennae bent into elbow shape; two sets of jaws; males and queens have wings, while workers do not

Habits Live in enormous family groups called colonies; most species build elaborate underground homes with many tunnels and chambers; strict social structure with three classes: queens, workers, and males; communicate mainly through scent and touch; defend home against predators by biting or stinging

Diet Varies greatly between species; some eat plants; others eat fungi; some are even carnivorous

Ants Everywhere!

Imagine waking up one morning to find hundreds of tiny black ants crawling around your kitchen. Your first instinct might be to start smashing them or spraying them with ant killer. But if you take a closer look instead, you could find something amazing.

You might notice a line of ants between the kitchen cabinets where food is stored and a crack where the floor meets the wall. If you followed this line outside, it might lead you to some small, black mounds of soil. Huge numbers of ants could be crawling around these hills. These numbers are nothing, however, compared to what lies below. Underground, thousands upon thousands of ants are hard at work performing the tasks their society relies upon. Some build tunnels. Others care for young. Many are carefully storing the food they have taken from your kitchen. It is an entire city of **insects** living beneath your backyard!

A line of black garden ants marches along a path through moss.

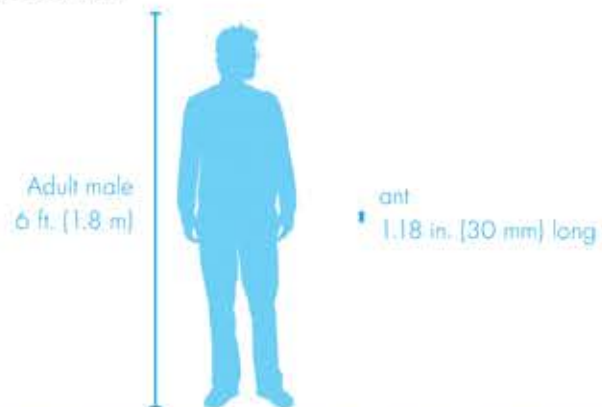




Small Wonders

One reason so many ants can live in one area is their small size. The smallest **species** is just 0.04 to 0.08 inches (1 to 2 millimeters) long. Even the largest ants only grow to lengths of about 1.18 inches (30 mm).

Ants are generally black, red, yellow, or brown. As with all insects, their bodies are divided into three main sections. These are called the head, the **thorax**, and the **abdomen**. A very skinny waist connects the thorax and abdomen. An ant's head is equipped with two separate sets of jaws: an inner set and an outer set. The ant uses the inner set to chew food. It uses the outer set to grip and carry objects. An ant also has a pair of **antennae** on its head. Each antenna has a single bend in it, making it appear similar to an elbow.



Dinoponera ants are among the world's largest ants.





Affecting the Environment

Ants can also cause problems in wild areas. As people travel and ship goods around the world, they sometimes bring new species to places where they do not naturally belong. When a new species is introduced to an area, it can throw off the natural balance of the **ecosystem**. Introduced ant species might take up too much space, forcing other insects away. If there is nothing that can prey on them, their population might grow too quickly. The ants might also take over food sources that native species rely on.

One particularly troublesome introduced species is the yellow crazy ant. Its native origins are uncertain. Experts do know that these ants are not native to the North American and Australian habitats they have invaded. Yellow crazy ants have caused other types of ants to become less common in these places. On one Australian island, they have also reduced the crab population by killing them and taking over their homes.

Yellow crazy ants have damaged native species on Australia's Christmas Island.



Habitat Map

