



Day 18 : Ants

Ant Basics 101

Ants are amazing insects. There are almost 10,000 different species of ants on earth- that's a lot of different types of ants! Ants are very social and live together in colonies. Like bees, there is a queen ant whose job is to keep the colony populated, and worker ants whose jobs are to build and maintain their home and to find and bring food back to their colony.



Awesome Ant Antics

Ants can accomplish amazing feats! Did you know that ants can lift objects that are up to 5,000 times their own bodyweight!!! That's like a human being able to carry a hippopotamus.



Some ants have pretty amazing skills. Leafcutter ants, for example, are excellent farmers! Leafcutter ants use leaves that they carry back to their underground nests to help the fungus gardens that they feed on grow.



In a leafcutter ant colony, the ants that are responsible for collecting leaves use their strong mandibles to cut pieces of the leaf off to take back to their nest. These ants even have a groove on the top of their head to help make carrying the leaves easier.

Here is a link to a cool time-lapse video from the Toledo Zoo that shows leafcutter ants collecting leaves to take back to their nests! [Leafcutter Ants Harvesting Plants](#)

Ant Observation

A great way to get to know some of your local ants is through observation! A sure-fire way to get ants to come say hello is by leaving them a sugar buffet to feast on. This activity is super fun and simple. All you need is paper, a writing utensil, and some honey.

The first step is to create a fun design- you could write out letters, make a picture, whatever you want- get creative! Once you're finished making your design the next step is to go over it with your honey.



Now it's time to take your artistic ant buffet outside! I recommend finding a spot that is away from your house and not near any regularly used walkways.

Now comes the hardest part- waiting! I would give your local ants about 20-25 minutes to discover your buffet- but check on it as frequently as you want! Once your ant friends show up, have fun observing them and their behavior. Record the interesting things you notice in your nature journal!

Once you are finished observing, tilt your paper and gently shake the ants onto the ground. You can compost your paper when you're finished.

Journal Prompt: Make a Venn diagram that shows how ants and bees are similar and different!

Share your Findings or Creations with us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)

Tomorrow's Theme: Clouds!

Time to explore! - Sara, Ant Enthusiast