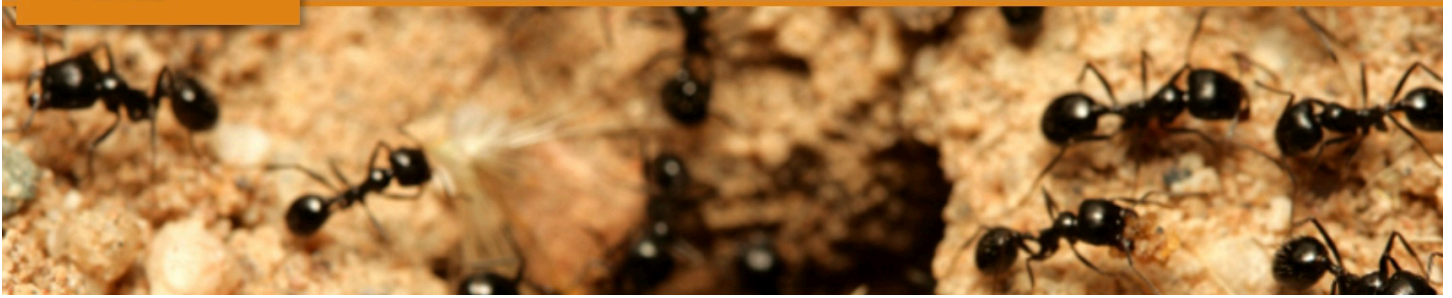


# Ants



- There are more than 12,000 species of ants all over the world.
- An ant can lift 20 times its own body weight. If a second grader was as strong as an ant, she would be able to pick up a car!
- Some queen ants can live for many years and have millions of babies!
- Ants don't have ears. Ants "hear" by feeling vibrations in the ground through their feet.
- When ants fight, it is usually to the death!
- When foraging, ants leave a pheromone trail so that they know where they've been.
- Queen ants have wings, which they shed when they start a new nest.
- Ants don't have lungs. Oxygen enters through tiny holes all over the body and carbon dioxide leaves through the same holes.
- When the queen of the colony dies, the colony can only survive a few months. Queens are rarely replaced and the workers are not able to reproduce.

Although ants are frustrating when they get into your home or when you're having a picnic, ants do help the environment. They are social insects, which means they live in large colonies or groups. Depending on the species, ant colonies can consist of millions of ants.

There are three kinds of ants in a colony: The queen, the female workers, and males. The queen and the males have wings, while the workers don't have wings. The queen is the only ant that can lay eggs. The male ant's job is to mate with future queen ants and they do not live very long afterwards. Once the queen grows to adulthood, she spends the rest of her life laying eggs! Depending on the species, a colony may have one queen or many queens.

Ant colonies also have soldier ants that protect the queen, defend the colony, gather or kill food, and attack enemy colonies in search for food and nesting space. If they defeat another ant colony, they take away eggs of the defeated ant colony. When the eggs hatch, the new ants become the "slave" ants for the colony. Some jobs of the colony include taking care of the eggs and babies, gathering food for the colony and building the anthills or mounds.