

All About Ants

By Gina Shaw



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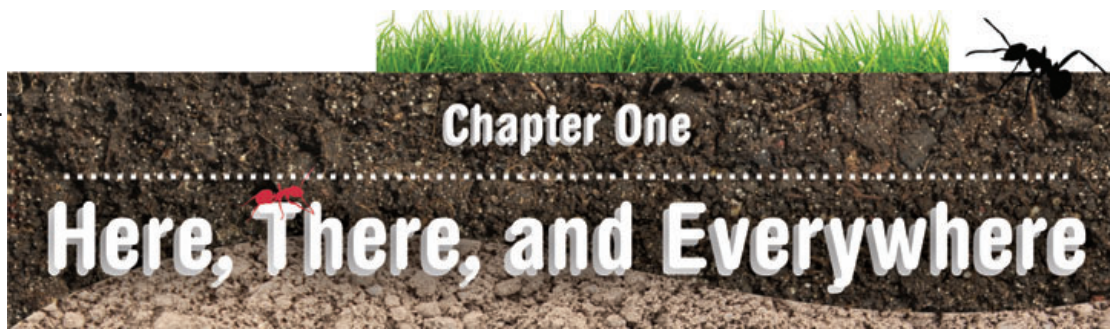
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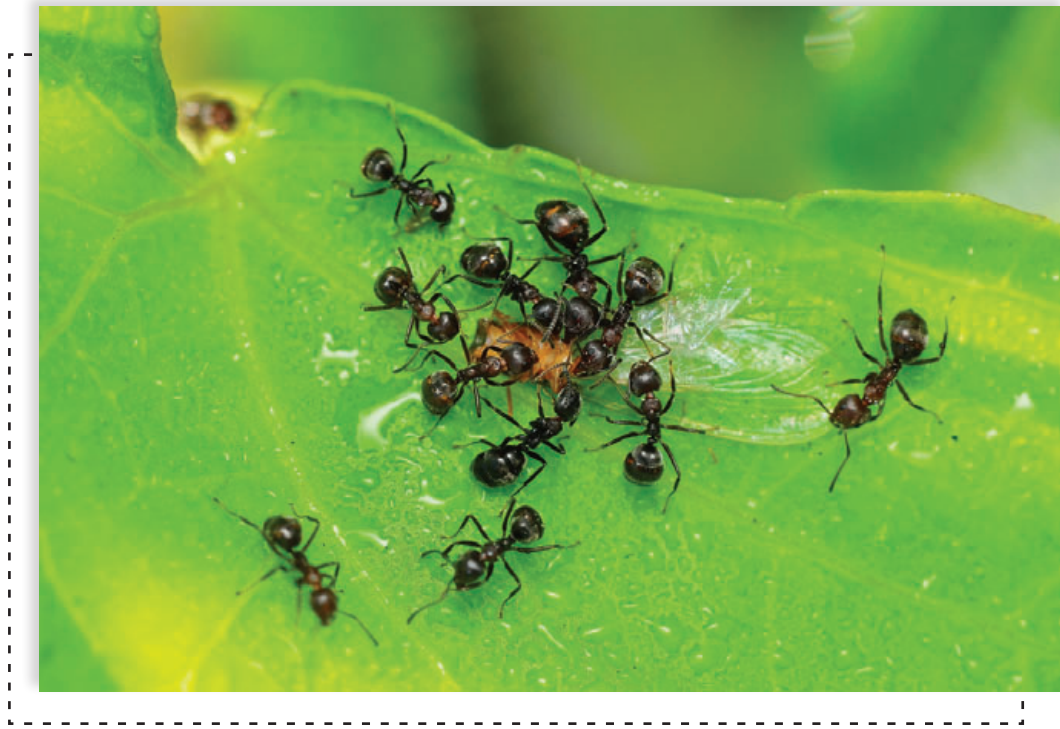
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Do you know what these are?



You are right! They are ants.

Ants have been around for a long, long time. They lived on the earth when dinosaurs did. Those animals are gone now. Ants are still here.

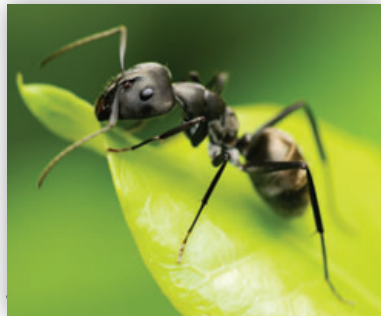
There are more than 10,000 kinds of ants. Here are a few kinds:



Red ant



Honey pot ant



Black ant

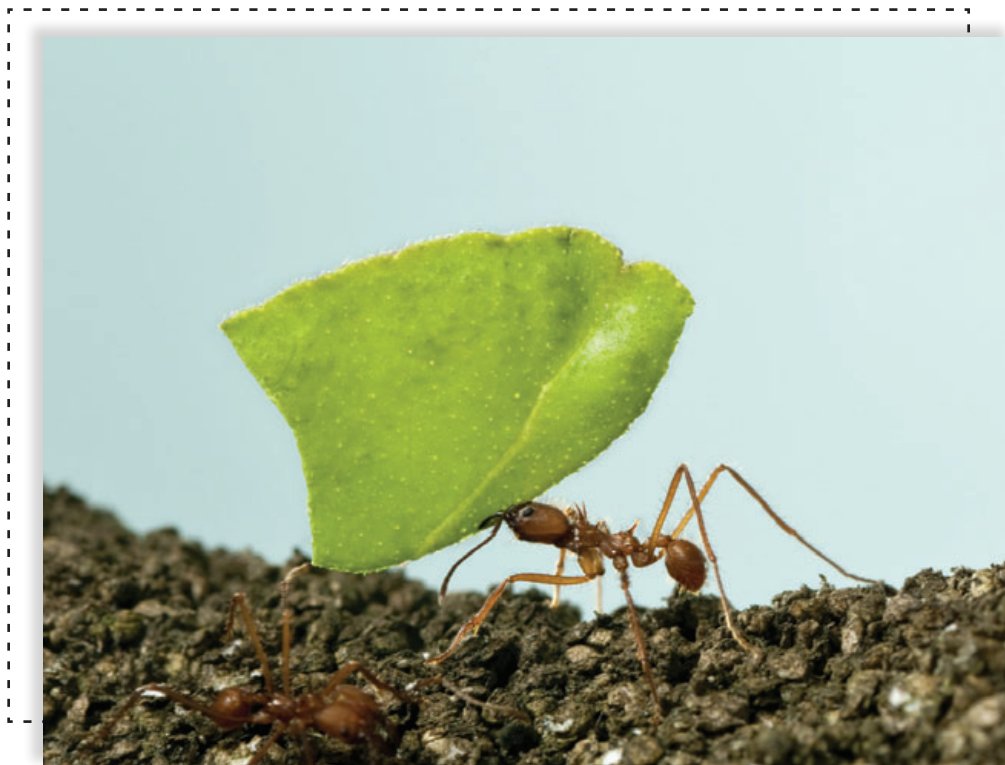


Army ant

Ants come in many colors. Some are black, brown, or red. Others are green, blue, or yellow.

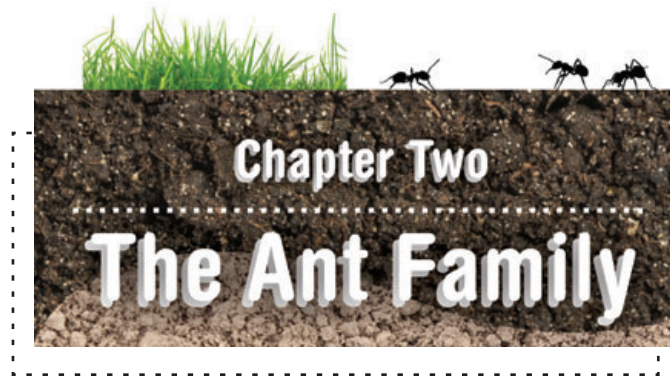
Ants live all over the world. They live in forests and fields. They live in cities, too. Ants do not live where it is very cold. They do not live where there is ice.

Most ants are tiny. They are very strong. An ant can lift 20 times its own weight. It can carry something that is five times bigger than it is.



A leafcutter ant

There are billions of ants in the world. That's a lot of ants!



Ants live and work together in groups. A group of ants is called a **colony**. A few ants or thousands of ants can live in one colony.



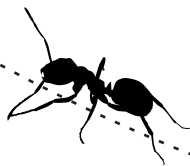
A colony of ants:

Every colony has one or more **queen ants**. The queen is the largest ant. She is the only one that can lay eggs. She lays hundreds of eggs during her lifetime.

The queen ant never leaves the **nest**. Some of her eggs become female worker ants. Others become male ants. A few are queen ants.

Worker ants do not lay eggs. Many work inside the nest. They take care of the queen and her eggs. They clean the nest. They feed the babies. They move the babies when the nest gets too hot or too cold. They also make the nest bigger.

Other worker ants work outside the nest. They find food. They carry food back to the nest. They feed the other ants. They keep the nest safe.



Ants live about 45 to 60 days. Queens can live between 10 to 30 years. A colony can only last a few months after a queen dies. The queen is the most important ant.



A queen ant and some female worker ants



Chapter Three
Where Do Ants Live?

Some ants live in old trees. Others live between rocks or leaves. There are ants that live on ships. Some live in tall buildings, too.



Ants on a leaf

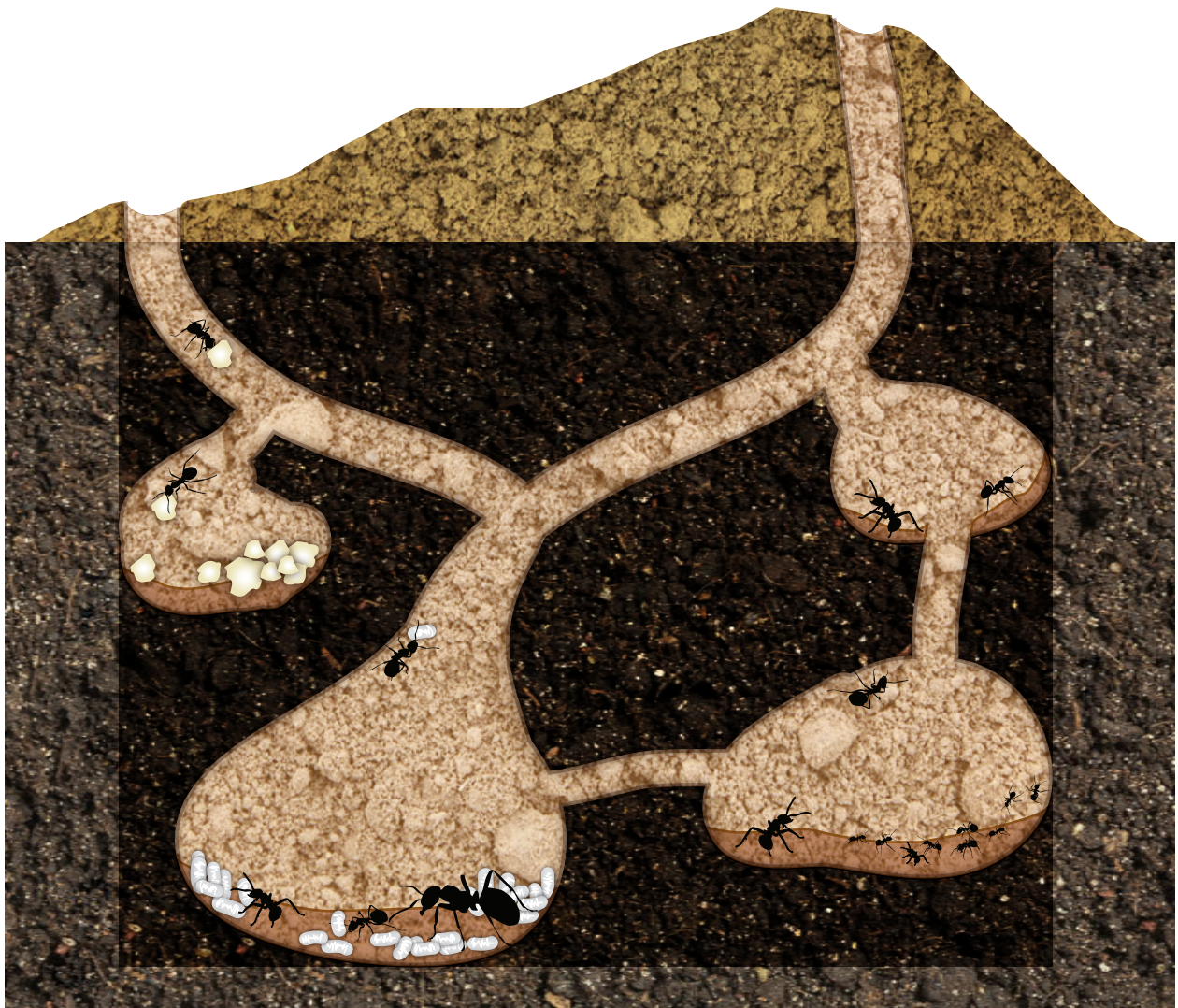
Most ants live under the ground. An ant's home is called a nest. Ants dig their nests with their legs. They carry the dirt outside. The nest looks like a hill. It is called an **anthill**.

An anthill



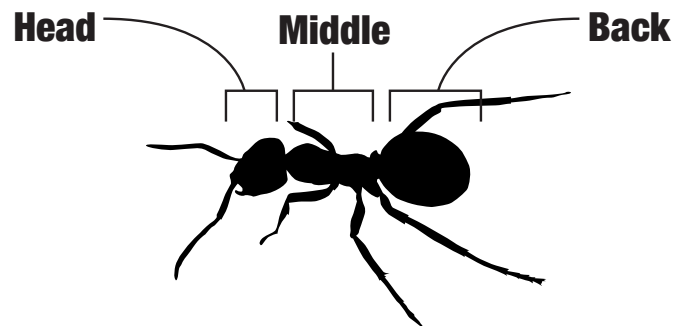
There are many rooms inside a nest. There are rooms to keep food. There is a room for the queen and her eggs. There are rooms where the worker ants care for the babies. There are rooms where the ants rest.

Ant nests are like people's homes. They help keep the ants safe.





An ant has three body parts. It has a head. It has a middle. It has a back.



An ant has two feelers on the top of its head. The feelers help it touch and talk. They help the ant find its way around. The ant also uses them to smell, taste, hear, and see.

Ants have six legs. Their legs help them run, climb, and dig. Their legs have tiny hairs. Ants use these hairs to clean their feelers. Ants have to keep their feelers very clean.

Ants eat many foods. They eat plants and animals. They look for seeds, fruit, bread, and other insects. Different kinds of ants like different foods.



Ants eating fruit



Why are ants important? When ants dig nests, they mix the soil. Plants and trees grow better in places where ants live.

Ants eat lots of insect **pests**. Ants are also food. Birds, frogs, and other animals eat ants.

Ants might be tiny, but we need them on Earth!



**anthill:**

a mound of soil, sand, or dirt made by ants when digging their nests

colony:

a group of ants that live together

nest:

an ant's home

pest:

an insect that destroys flowers, fruits, or vegetables

queen ant:

the largest ant in an ant colony who lays eggs

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