

MAKE YOUR OWN ANT FARM

An ant colony can have 20 million ants! Ant colonies usually live in tunnels they dig in the earth. Here's a way to get an ant's eye view.



WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- A small, clear plastic cup or container with a fitted lid (If you don't have a fitted lid, use wax paper or clear plastic wrap for a cover, held on tightly with a rubber band.)
- A needle or pushpin (to punch holes in lid or cover)
- Some dirt with live ants
- A stick
- A shallow pan
- Water
- Water dropper or spoon
- Small amount of birdseed, leaves or bread crumbs

WHAT TO DO

- 1** Poke some holes in the cup lid or cover. (You might have to ask an adult for help.)
- 2** Go on an ant hunt to find a place with earth and ants crawling around. Scoop up enough dirt to fill the cup halfway. Add a little water to make the dirt damp.
- 3** If you don't have 12 ants or more in your scoop of earth, let some more ants crawl up the stick. (Get the extra ants from the same place you found the first group, so the ants won't fight.) Tap the stick until the ants fall in the cup, then cover tightly. Put the cup in a shallow pan of water. (This helps keep the ants from escaping).

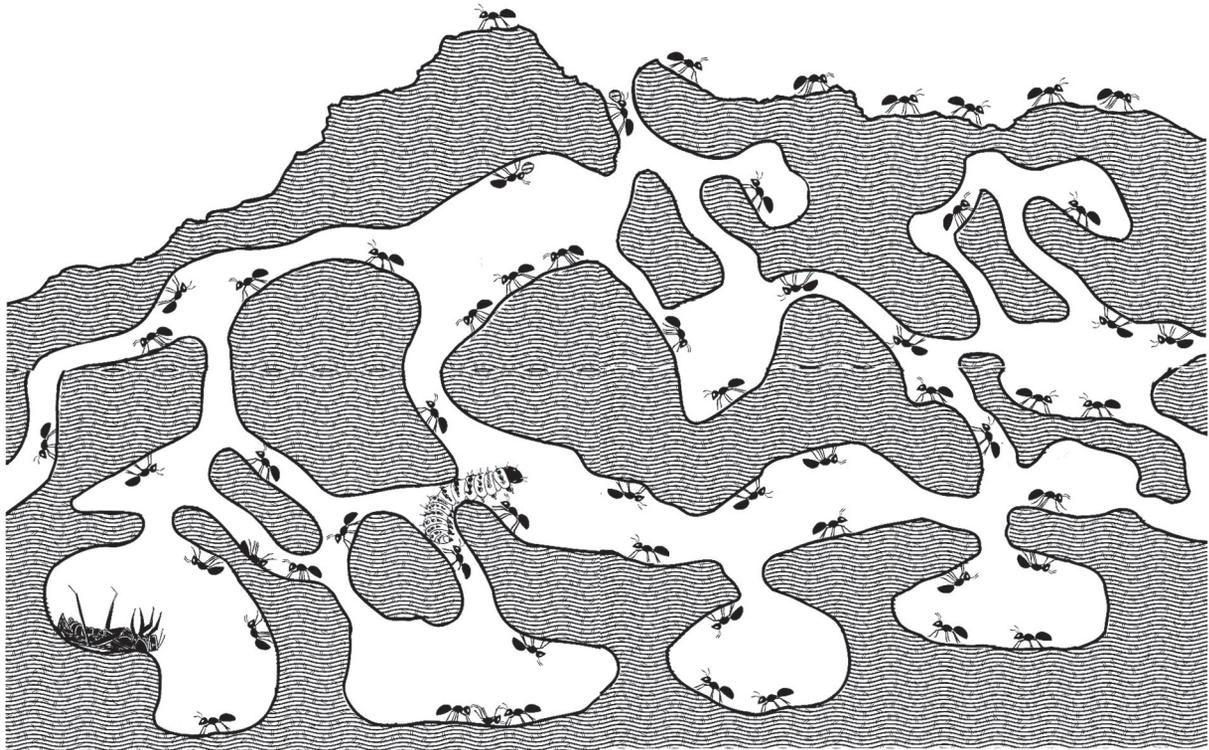


ACTIVITY CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE (PAGE 1 OF 3)

This activity was modified and adapted from the *Ant Homes Under the Ground* Teacher's Guide published by LHS Great Explorations in Math and Science (GEMS).

MAKE YOUR OWN ANT FARM (ACTIVITY CONTINUED)

- 4** Feed the ants just one birdseed, one leaf piece, or one wet, sugared crumb every few days. Don't feed them too much! Add 5-6 water drops every two days.



ANT NEST

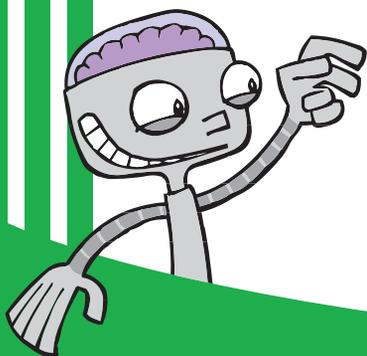
- 5** After the ants start tunneling, it's okay to take off the cover. Lift the cup carefully to see the tunnels. Don't shake the farm or the tunnels will collapse! What are the ants doing? How do they dig?

ACTIVITY CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE (PAGE 2 OF 3)

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MAKE YOUR OWN ANT FARM (ACTIVITY CONTINUED)

6 Draw a map of the ants' tunnels.



DID YOU KNOW?

- There are at least 10,000 different kinds of ants.
- Some ants can pull pieces of food that are 50 times their own weight.

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