

TRULY ON ANTS



There are an estimated 10,000 ant species in the world. The smallest of which is .8mm long, while the largest is a whopping 41 mm long.

Ants are social insects, living in a colony composed of hundreds of thousands of insects. The colony has a rigid caste consisting of one or more *Queens, males* and *workers*, which include soldiers and reproductives.

Each caste is very task specific, working for the benefit of the colony. The various castes must live together cooperatively in order to survive. Conditions that are conducive to ant infestation include an adequate food supply, harbourage, a moisture source and adequate climatic conditions. While ants have



adapted to most climatic conditions, different species have different needs.

Ants feed on a variety of food, including most foods in the human environment. Varying with each species, ants will consume honeydew, sweets, proteins, oils, seeds, meats, plants, live insects (e.g. aphids or other ants) and dead insect remains. The colony's food choices are based on the pheromones the queen releases.



While inconvenient in the human environment, ants serve a purpose in nature. They are predatory as some ants consume bed bugs and a multitude of other insects. As scavengers, the ant population recycles organic materials. Their subterranean activities aerate and revitalize top soil. The colony's subterranean food locker can enrich the soil over time. Ants can even pollinate plants and some human populations consume ants. Yes, ants are a delicacy in some cultures.

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