



# Build An Ant Habitat

Like bees, wasps, and termites, ants live in groups called colonies. You can observe the behavior of these social insects by making your own habitat.

You will need these materials:

- A large glass jar
- Tape
- A piece of sponge
- Soft drink can
- Sand
- Food scraps
- Black construction paper
- Dirt and ants from an ant hill\*

• To catch the ants, find an ant hill, and with a small garden shovel, dig up the ant hill and the ants. Until you place them in the habitat, keep the ants and the dirt in another jar, covered with fine mesh and secured with a rubber band to let air in but keep ants from getting out.

Here's what you do:



**Step 1:** Fill the soft drink can with sand.



**Step 2:** Seal the opening with tape. (If you prefer, you can use an unopened can of soda.)

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# BUG EXPERIMENTS



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STEP  
3



**Step 3:** Put the can into the glass jar.

STEP  
4



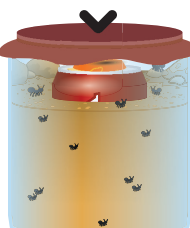
**Step 4:** Next, fill the rest of the glass jar with dirt and ants. Do not pack the dirt too tightly, but fill the entire jar. Because the ants will not be able to enter the can, they will have to build tunnels near the outside of the jar where you can see them.

STEP  
5



**Step 5:** Place a wet piece of sponge on top of the soft drink can, and be sure to keep it moist.

STEP  
6



**Step 6:** Cover the jar with a piece of cloth secured with a rubber band so the ants cannot crawl out.

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**Step 7:** Tape the black paper over the outside of the jar so the ants will tunnel against the inside of the jar. It may take about a week for complex tunnels to really begin developing. You can remove the paper for short periods to observe the ants' behavior.

**Important:** You must feed your ants. Place food scraps on top of the dirt. Sometimes you can observe them feeding, and you can discover what they like to eat the most. Try offering sugar water, dry pet food, and peices of fruit.

