

The Pest Post



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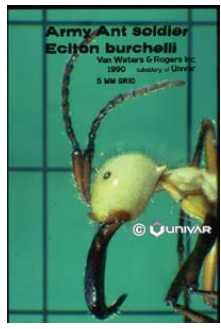
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March 2010

Ants: Interesting Facts

source: buginfo.com

- Some researchers say that Fire Ants have an internal “compass” created by eating tiny bits of a mineral called magnetite, allowing them to navigate in darkness.
- African Weaver Ants can carry prey weighing more than 1000 times their own weight, hauling it back to their nest for food.



- If a 175 pound human had the comparative strength of an ant he could lift almost 9000 pounds.
- Common expressions using ants
 1. Got ants in your pants
 2. As common as ants at a picnic.
 3. As industrious as ants.
- Weaver Ants in Asia use their larvae as sewing machines. The larvae produce silk on command, and the worker ants move the larva back and forth on the edges of leaves they have pulled together, creating a hollow cave of leaves in which they nest.
- Some natives of tropical Asian countries use large ants as “stitches” to close open wounds. They will pull the edges of the skin together at the wound site, allow the ant to

bite across the wound, and then cut the head off the ant, causing it to stay there with its jaws holding the skin together.

- In South America the Leaf Cutting Ants are capable of completely stripping all the leaves off a tree in a single night. The leaves grow back quickly, causing no harm to the tree.
- The Army Ants of South America have enormous colonies of very large, aggressive ants. However, they have no nest. Instead, they may pick up everything and everyone and move each day, forming a large ball of ants at night to hide the queen and their young within.
- Some ants are called “Slave Makers”, for their trait of raiding nests of other species, stealing eggs from that nest, and raising these captives through to the adult stage, where they now serve as the workers for the colony that stole them.



- There are about 9000 species of birds identified throughout the world. There are almost that many species of ants - currently about 8800.
- The largest ants in the world are the Driver Ants in Africa. Some workers reach almost one and a half inches long. In contrast, the smallest ant species is one from

Sri Lanka, whose workers are only 1/30th of an inch long.

- The “bullet” ants of Central and South America are given that name due to the intense, burning pain caused by their sting.
- Honey Ants, found in the southwest United States, have one group of individuals in their colony that are called “repletes”. The sole job of the replete is to spend its life hanging upside down in the colony, filled with the nectar brought back by the workers.



- The Crazy Ant gets its name from the wild manner in which the workers run around when they are disturbed or agitated.
- When disturbed many ants spray formic acid out of their abdomen. More than 150 species of birds have been observed, picking up ants in their beaks and placing the ants in their feathers. The formic acid the ants then spray kills mites on the birds.

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Recommended Reading

Rats: Observations on the History and Habitat of the City's Most Unwanted Inhabitants

by Robert Sullivan

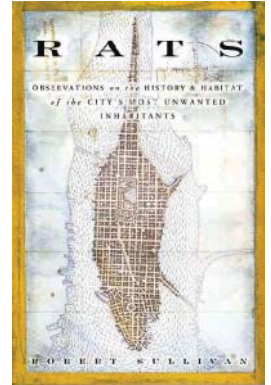
<http://amzn.com/1582344779>

From Publishers Weekly:

In this excellent narrative, Sullivan uses the brown rat as the vehicle for a labyrinthine history of the Big Apple. After pointing out a host of facts about rats that are sure to make you start itching (“if you are in New York... you are within close proximity to one or more rats having sex”), Sullivan quickly focuses in on the rat’s seemingly inexhaustible number of connections to mankind. Observing a group of rats in a New York City alley, just blocks from a pre-September 11 World Trade Center, leads Sullivan into a timeless world that has more twists than Manhattan’s rat-friendly underbelly.

Conversations and field studies with “pest control technicians” spirit him back to 1960s Harlem, when rat infestations played a part in the Civil Rights movement and the creation of tenants’ organizations. Researching the names of the streets and landmarks near the rats’ homes, Sullivan is led even deeper into the city’s history till he is back to the 19th century, when the real gangs of New York were the packs of rats that overran the city’s bustling docks. Like any true New Yorker, Sullivan is able to convey simultaneously the feelings of disgust and awe that most city dwellers have for the scurrying masses that live among them. These feelings, coupled with his ability to literally and figuratively insert himself into the company of his hairy neighbors, help to personalize the myriad of topics : urban renewal, labor strikes, congressional bills, disease control, September 11-that rats have nosed their way into over the years. This book is a must pickup for every city dweller, even if you’ll feel like you need to wash your hands when you put it down.

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