



They may be small, but boy are these little critters powerful!

Myrmecology [mur-mi-KOL-uh-jee] -The branch of insect science (Entomology) that studies Ants.

Check out our ten favorite facts about ants that are guaranteed to blow your mind...

1. There are over 12,000 ant species worldwide

Ranging from the ant you might find scuttling across your picnic to the ants building underground fortresses in the rainforest!



2. The bullet ant is said to have the most painful sting in the world!

Living in humid jungle conditions such as the Amazon, their sting has been compared to being hit by a bullet – *ouch!*

3. Fire ants cause over 3 billion dollars worth of damage a year!

North America's red imported fire ant might only be little, but the tiny critters have a painful bite which causes a burning sensation – hence the name "fire ant", which costs the US millions in veterinary and medical bills every year! They've also been known to cause damage to farmer's crops.



4. Ants are the longest living insects

Unlike some bugs who might only live for days or even hours, the queen ant of one particular species – the *Pogonomyrmex Owyheeii* – can live up to *30 years* – so be careful not to stand on her!



5. The ant is one of the world's strongest creatures in relation to its size

A single ant can carry 50 times its own bodyweight, and they'll even work together to move bigger objects as a group!

Ants work together to carry leaves and twigs back to their nests





6. **Ants hold the record for the fastest movement in the animal kingdom**

The aptly named species of trap jaw ant, can close its jaws at 140mph, which it uses to kill its prey or injure predators. Image

if *that* bit you on the bum!

7. **Ants can be found on every single continent except Antarctica**

Ironic really, when you consider the name...

8. **Ants are social insects which live in colonies**

The colony, also called a formicary, is made up of one or more egg-laying queens and a large amount of female “worker” ants who tend to her, build and maintain the nest, forage for food and care for the young. Male ants have wings and their only function is to mate with the queen.

9. **Ants don’t have ears, and some of them don’t have eyes!**

Ants “listen” by feeling vibrations from the ground through their feet, and eye-less ants such as the driver ant species can communicate by using their antennae! Plus, they can send chemical signals (called pheromones) released through their body to send messages to other ants! They send out warnings when danger’s near, leave trails of pheromones leading to food sources and even use them to attract a mate – a sort of ant love potion!

10. **The largest ant’s nest ever found was over 3,700 miles wide!**

Found in Argentina in 2000, the ginormous colony housed 33 ant populations which had merged into one giant super colony, with millions of nests and billions of workers!





An experiment on the International Space Station looked at how ant colonies responded to the extreme environment of microgravity when trying to solve their collective need for resources

Credit: NASA

Are there Ants in Space? Ants Hold Their Own Searching in Space ~By Discovery News | April 3, 2015 07:00am ET

In 2014, the International Space Station (ISS) took on some unusual passengers: eight groups of ants, which were observed trying to perform searches under microgravity conditions. The goal? To learn more about how these tiny creatures search an area collectively and how they adapt to changing conditions —without any centralized control over the effort.

The hope, according to researchers behind the study, is that one day such knowledge could be applied in areas such as robotics, where autonomous search-and-rescue robots might be able to search more thoroughly using better algorithms.