



**Spectacular
Animal Towns**

The Ant's Nest

A Huge, Underground City

by Miriam Aronin

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The Ant's Nest

A Huge, Underground City



by Miriam Aronin

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A Spectacular Discovery

In 2005, forest workers in Northumberland, England, made a spectacular discovery. Wood ants in a forest there had built an **anthill** out of spruce and pine tree needles that was five and a half feet (1.7 m) tall.

“I couldn’t believe its sheer **scale**,” said forest worker Steve Morris. Most of the anthills he had seen were no more than two feet (.6 m) tall.



Wood ants

This giant anthill, however, was only the entrance to the wood ants' huge home. Tunnels starting in the anthill led to a hidden underground nest that was home to a **colony** of about 500,000 wood ants!



A large anthill built by wood ants



Wood ants spend time in their aboveground anthill only in the summer. During the cold winter, the ants live in their underground nest, where it is warmer.

Nest Builders

The forest workers in Northumberland called their discovery the ant “Empire State Building.” The giant anthill reminded the workers of the famous New York City skyscraper. The nest underneath, however, was more like an entire city.

Ants Around the World



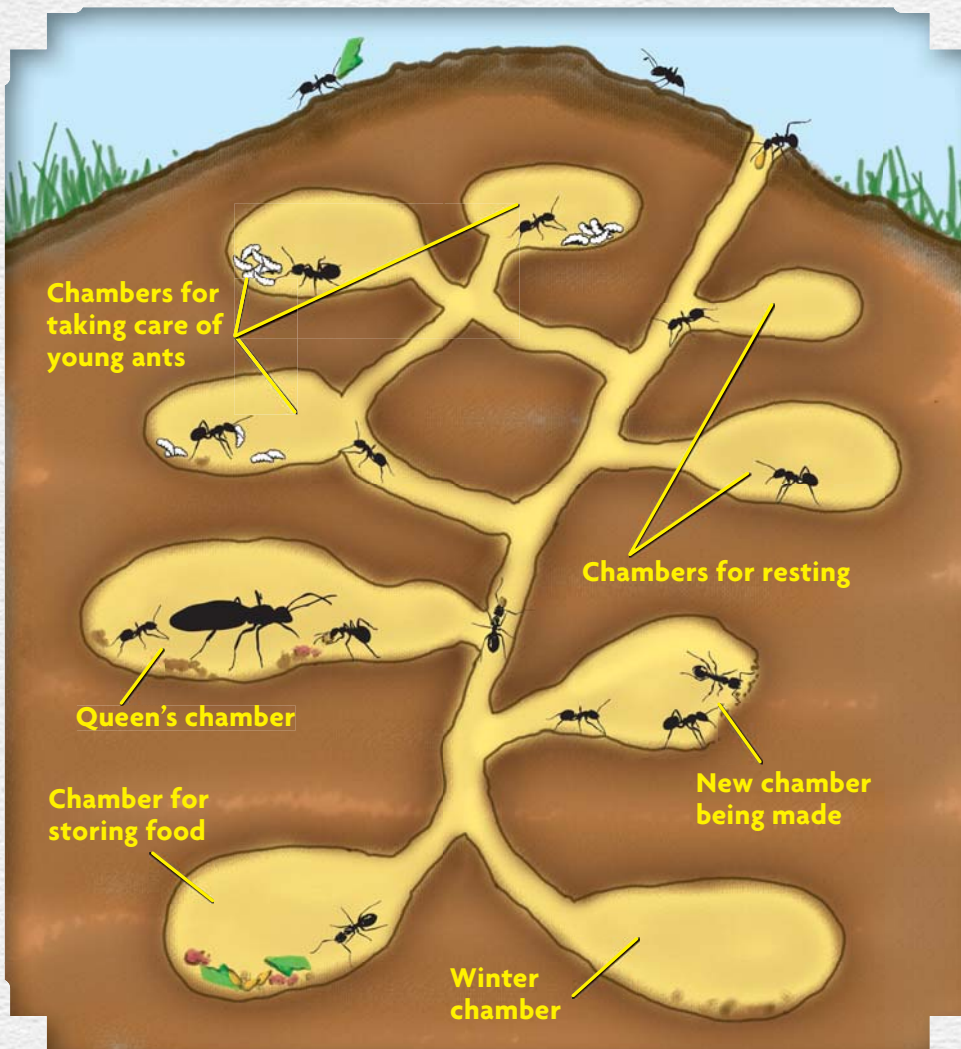
Ants are found all over the world except in a few of the coldest areas.

There are more than 10,000 **species** of ants in the world.

Just as human cities are made up of many buildings, ant nests are made up of many **chambers**. In each chamber, the **insects** perform a different task to meet the colony's needs.

In some chambers, adult ants care for the colony's young. They feed and wash the young ants to make sure that they grow up healthy. Ants use other chambers to store food. There are even chambers just for resting.

An Ant's Nest



People build streets and roads to connect buildings in a city. Ants dig tunnels to connect the chambers in their nest.

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About the Author

Miriam Aronin is a writer and editor. She enjoys reading, knitting, and learning about animals.



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A Huge, Underground City

In 2005, forest workers in Northumberland, England, made a spectacular discovery. Wood ants in a forest there had built an anthill out of spruce and pine needles that was five and a half feet (1.7 m) tall. This towering structure, however, was only the entrance to the wood ant's huge home. Tunnels starting in the anthill led to a hidden underground nest that was home to a colony of 500,000 wood ants!

Welcome to the ant's huge underground city. Here you'll discover how the insects rest, take care of their queen, and raise their young. You'll also find out how some ants grow their own food and carry out other surprising tasks as they go about their busy lives.

The Ant's Nest
A Huge, Underground City

The Bat's Cave
A Dark City

The Beaver's Lodge
Building with Leftovers

The Coral Reef
A Giant City Under the Sea

The Honey Bee's Hive
A Thriving City

The Prairie Dog's Town
A Perfect Hideaway

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