

Introduction

Ants are one of the most diverse and abundant groups of insects on Earth. They are found in almost every habitat, from the tropics to the poles, and from the highest mountains to the deepest oceans. Ants play a crucial role in many ecosystems, including soil aeration, nutrient cycling, and seed dispersal. They are also important to humans, both as pests and as beneficial organisms.

Ants and Human Interactions

Ants have a long history of interaction with humans. Some species, such as the fire ant, have become major pests, causing significant damage to crops and infrastructure. Other species, such as the leafcutter ant, are used in agriculture for soil enrichment. Ants are also used in medicine, as some species produce compounds that have potential therapeutic applications.

Ant Diversity and Evolution

There are over 20,000 species of ants in the world, belonging to over 200 genera. The ants are members of the order Hymenoptera, which also includes bees and wasps. Ants are highly social insects, living in colonies that can range in size from a few individuals to millions. The evolution of ants is a complex process, with many species having evolved from other Hymenoptera.

Ants in the Americas

The Americas are home to a rich diversity of ant species. Some species are native to the continent, while others have been introduced from other parts of the world. The distribution of ants in the Americas is influenced by a variety of factors, including climate, geography, and human activity.

Ants and Conservation

Ants are important indicators of ecosystem health. Changes in ant diversity and abundance can be a sign of environmental degradation. Conservation efforts should focus on protecting the habitats of native ant species and preventing the introduction of invasive species.

Ant #1

Myrmica americana

Native to America and is found in almost every state.



Ant #2

Ants #2, 5-9 are all *Lasius neoniger*.

Native to America and are mostly found in the northeastern states.



Collection site of ants #11-20. In a more polluted sandy area, near water. (South Ferry)



Ant #3

Camponotus castaneus

Native to America and lives mostly in the southeastern states.



Collection site of ants #1-9. In a less polluted grassy area. (School)



Ant #4

Monomorium minimum

Native to America and lives mostly in the southern states.



Ant #19

Ants #11-20 are all *Tetrasorium caespitum*.

Native to Europe. It is unknown why/how the ants are in America.

