



# Crooked Creek

## Environmental Learning Center

Volume 3

AUGUST

Issue 8



It is picnic time and that means....ANTS! Find out about these amazing creatures and try to appreciate their abilities.

Human beings have had a mixed relationship with ants through most of history. On the one hand, ants have often been used in fables and children's stories to represent industriousness and cooperative effort.

They can also be important for clearing out insect pests and aerating the soil. On the other hand, they can become minor annoyances or major pests themselves when they invade homes, yards, gardens, fields and of course picnics. (academickids.com)

Read the interesting ant facts on page two and find out more about these fascinating creatures.

Ants build many different types of homes. Many ants build simple little mounds out of dirt or sand. Other ants use small sticks mixed with dirt and sand to make a stronger mound that offers protection from rain. Western Harvester ants make a small mound on top, but then tunnel up to **15 feet** straight down to hibernate during winter. Ant mounds consist of many chambers connected by tunnels. Different chambers are used for nurseries, food storage, and resting places for the worker ants. Some ants live in wood like termites. Army ants don't make a home at all but travel in large groups searching for food.

**Sociology:** Ants are a social insect, which means they live in large colonies or groups. Some colonies consist of millions of ants. There are three types of ants in each species, the queen, the sterile female workers, and males. The male ants only serve one purpose, to mate with future queen ants and do not live very long. The queen grows to adulthood, mates, and then spends the rest of her life laying eggs. A colony may have only one queen, or there may be many queens depending on the species. Ants go through four stages of development: egg, larva, pupa, and adult.

**Organs:** Ants do not have lungs. Oxygen enters through tiny holes all over the body and Carbon Dioxide leaves through the same holes. There are no blood vessels. The heart is a long tube that pumps colorless blood from the head back to the rear and then back up to the head again. The blood kind of coats the insides of the ants and is then sucked into the tube and pumped up to the head again. The nervous system of ants consists of a long nerve cord that also runs from head to rear with branches leading to the parts of the body, kind of like a human spinal cord.



**Communication:** If you watch ants for any length of time you will see that they really do communicate with each other and very effectively too. Ants communicate by touching each other with their antennae. Ants also use chemicals called pheromones to leave scent trails for other ants to follow.

## LOOKING AHEAD

- **Sunday Afternoon Program:**

Terry Laux's, Owl Program,  
August 6, 2006 Program begins at 2 PM

- ◆ **The Dayton Fair: Monday, August 14 through Friday the 19th.**  
We will have a booth at the Dayton Fair along with the Armstrong Educational Trust. Come up to the fair and stop in to say hello.

- **Sunday Afternoon Program:**

Ed and Sue Bruce, French and Indian War  
August 20, 2006 Program begins at 2 PM

SIGNS THAT FALL IS ON ITS WAY!

GEESE HAVE BEEN SPOTTED FLYING SOUTH

THE SYCAMORES ARE SHEDDING THEIR  
BARK

IT IS GETTING DARK EARLIER AT NIGHT

THE FALL FLOWERS ARE BEGINNING TO  
BLOOM

IF THE ROBIN IS TO MANY THE HARBINGER OF SPRING, THEN  
THE CICADA IS PERHAPS AN ADVANCE SCOUT FOR AUTUMN  
WARNING ALL WHO HEAR IT TO "ENJOY THE SUMMER WHILE YOU  
CAN FOR THE END IS NEAR." CHARLES FONAAS

**Summer Adventure Camp 2006 was a GREAT success!! The campers learned topics such as: orienteering, cooperation, water quality issues, forestry, insect identification, canoeing, traversing and MY personal favorite repelling!**



**CROOKED CREEK  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
LEARNING CENTER**

[www.crookedcreekelc.org](http://www.crookedcreekelc.org)

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