

SCHOOL OF ANTS. Instructions for your science project

To make your own collecting kit you will need:

10 x white index cards (or white card/paper rectangles 10 cm x 12 cm)
10 x cotton wool balls
Sugar solution (Half a cup of water + half a tablespoon of sugar, stirred until sugar dissolved)
Arnott's Scotch finger™ biscuit
3 x cocktail frankfurts from the deli at the supermarket (not canned ones)
10 x small zip lock sandwich bags
1 x big ziplock bag
1 pencil for writing labels and recording data
1 x tough bag from Australia Post to send us your ants.

Experimental set up:

STEP 1: Find a spot to do the experiment. Have you had a look around your park, backyard or school grounds? Where do you notice quite a lot of ants? Do the experiment there as long as you can access concrete and a green area like grass or a garden bed.

STEP 2: Write the number **P1-P5** on five of your index cards – they will go on a paved area like PLAYGROUND, CONCRETE, BRICKS or PAVERS. Write the number **G1-G5** on another five cards – they will go on a green area like GARDEN, GRASS or BARE GROUND. Place your five cards in their respective habitat about 2-3 metres apart, so that you have two sets of five cards on the ground.

STEP 3: On each index card place a thin slice of cocktail frankfurt, one cotton ball soaked in your sugar solution (squeezed out so it's not dripping), and a small piece of a scotch finger biscuit (break in half and use half a finger on each card). You might need to use rocks to hold the card down if it's windy, and make sure the food bits are not touching each other.

STEP 4: Record what time you put the food on the cards, and describe the weather on the day. Start your clocks!

STEP 5: Leave the cards out for ONE HOUR and try and make sure birds or lizards don't steal the yummy food.

STEP 6: Do something fun outside without disturbing your cards, and when you come back to your cards, COUNT THE ANTS on each food type and record this data on the DATA COLLECTION page supplied. You can also take a photo if you have a camera/iPad to do it with and count them from the photo, but sometimes it is difficult to see ants under the food. Then quickly place each card with the food and as many ants as possible into a small ziplock bag and seal it tight.

STEP 7: Place all ziplock bags into the freezer overnight. The next day, carefully take out the bits of food without taking out the ants, then put them in a big bag and send them to our address at UNE, Armidale NSW

School of Ants: <http://schoolofants.net.au/>

SCHOOL OF ANTS Data collection

Collector's name(s) and school:
Location of collection (street address):
Date:
EXACT Time cards were put out with food on top:
Weather: (e.g. sunny, cloudy, windy etc)

Record the number of ants on each food type for the PAVED SPACE (playground, concrete) here:			
	Frankfurt	Sugar cotton ball	Biscuit
Card P1			
Card P2			
Card P3			
Card P4			
Card P5			
Record the number of ants on each food type for the GREEN SPACE (garden, grass) here:			
	Frankfurt	Sugar cotton ball	Biscuit
Card G1			
Card G2			
Card G3			
Card G4			
Card G5			
EXACT Time cards were collected and ziplocked:			
Did anything go wrong? It's OK if it did, but we need to know!			