



WELCOME TO THE SCHOOL OF ANTS!

Dear Citizen Scientists,

WELCOME to School of Ants, and thank you for deciding to get to know your ants a little bit better. Our objectives are to understand the diversity, distribution and diet of dominant ground living ants around Australia.

We are interested in what ant species are attracted to sugars, protein and fats & oils in one hour. They tend to be the ones that annihilate your lunch if you drop it in the playground, and in Australia we know many of them as “little black ants”. How many species, and what species make up this group of ants?

You are about to become a scientist to help us in this endeavour. You’ll have several important jobs that all scientists must do for a research project to be successful:

1. **Following instructions carefully.** We have provided the instructions for you, so pay attention!
2. **Setting up the project.** Preparing your materials ready for data collection;
3. **Working in a team.** Working together with your team is important to complete your collections and data sheet to the best of your ability;
4. **Making & recording observations.** Always be on the lookout for interesting things your ants are doing, and write them down;
5. **Enjoying the process of discovery!**

There are some tricky aspects to this project too. You will be counting fast moving ants around frankfurts, cotton wool balls and biscuits, which can be difficult. You’ll be collecting into ziplock bags those same fast running ants.

Please be responsible scientists, and only collect what you need for this project. You should not kill any organism for no reason, and this is true for insects as much as vertebrates. You can check out our Code of Conduct on the website to make sure you are collecting in an ethical way.

To find out what species of ants are in your backyard, school grounds or parklands, visit our website <http://schoolofants.net.au/> where they will appear on our map. Identifying ants is time consuming, so you might need to be patient for a month or so before we can confirm your species. Discovery takes time.

Thanks again for helping us, and we hope you enjoy learning about ants as much as we do.

The School of Ants team.

