

# Ant Oddities



Flight to the Finish Between Red and Black Ants

Prepared by National Geographic Society, Washington, D. C. W. H. R. HARRIS.

**L**IKE humans, there are all kinds of ants—busy ants and ants that live on the accomplishments of others.

One often feels sorry for some of the industrious species of Formica, solid citizens, but really the "forgotten ants," because they seem to be preyed upon by every sort of warrior ant and their nests are nearly always shared with various guests and parasites.

The hundreds of ants, very different from each other, sometimes live together amicably, each occupying a separate part of the same nest and contributing to the general welfare.

The little shampoo ant (Leptothorax emersoni), discovered by Dr. William Morton Wheeler of Harvard in the peat bogs of Connecticut, lives in the nests of Myrmica canadensis, a much larger species. When the Leptothorax worker needs food, it approaches the Myrmica worker and proceeds to stimulate and lick it. The Myrmica obviously enjoys this, for it regurgitates food to the Leptothorax.

One day in Brazil a scientist was investigating an ant nest consisting of a mass of earth six inches in diameter in a fork of a tree. He tapped this nest gently with his forceps, and the surface was immediately covered with small, reddish-brown ants of the genus Dolichoderus. When he dug into the nest to find the various forms, a swarm of Odontomachus rushed out and one of the stung him. Odontomachus was a dozen times as big as the Dolichoderus and provided with strong biting jaws and a red-hot sting.

Finding a rare ant.

Often ant hunters get as big a thrill from a successful search for a rare ant as a big game hunter from the capture of giraffes or elephants. There is about as much physical exertion involved, returning over thousands of stones and logs, digging into the earth, chopping hard wood, and peeling bark from innumerable dead trees.

Jack frequently plays an important part. In 1901 Father Schmitt, a Jesuit missionary, sent to the great myrmecologist, Forel, of Switzerland, a single specimen of an ant and extraordinary ant from Haiti. Forel described it and named the genus after his good friend, Carol Emery of Bologna, and the species after the Jesuit (Emeryella schmitti). The long specimen was the only representative of its kind in collections.

In Haiti at the end of a month's work a student found one solitary worker among a roadside. He had no fine-toothed comb with him, but for two months he tried every other method he knew of to discover the nest of more of the workers.

Then one evening he went for a stroll just before dinner and noticed on the path a millipede, or thousand-legger, moving in an unusual way. Bending over, he saw that the millipede was dead and was being carried by an ant. The ant was Emeryella!

It took all his strength of character to keep from seizing both ant and prep at once, but he smoked his pipe as calmly as he could and watched the ant till it leisurely entered a small hole at one side of the stupa.

When the stone was turned over there was an entire colony of some sixty workers. Later, in the same locality, he found a similar colony, and specimens of these he brought distributed to all the important ant collections in museums all over the world.

No Female of the Species.

There were no females in either nest, so it is not improbable that this species lacks a special female, and that one of the workers functions as egg-layer. At night there were a few males in the student's quest to light a match, which from its general character was assumed to be the male of the species.

He had talked about Emeryella so much that it became well known to the scant white population of the island under the name of "Mère Ella Schmitt" and when he finally reported his discovery there was a great celebration among his fellow-Americans, railroad men vacationing at Fort-au-Français.

Another missionary priest, Pere Salle, had sent to the museum in Paris from Haiti a curious nest of vegetable fiber, not unlike a wasp's nest.

A scientist, while rummaging about among the specimens, found it and tapped it on a piece of white paper. Several ants and dried ants dropped out. They belonged to the genus Macromischa, the most exquisitely formed of the ants and with beautiful metallic colorations—purples, greens, and blues. The genus is interesting, too, because it alone of the ants of the West Indies has developed into numerous species. About thirty are known from Cuba alone.

Fire Ant Is a Stinger.

The fire ant (Solenopsis geminata) is such a good traveler that one variety or another is found throughout the warmer parts of the earth. It gets its name from the painful burning sting it can inflict. A colony contains vast numbers of workers. They have recently been reported as going great damage to young quail in the southeastern states.

Fire ants nest in almost any kind of locality and are extremely prolific. Even fire ants found in Brazil that when the water rises and washes out a colony, the ants form a ball, queen and brood in the middle, and the living balls float away to a tree or to higher ground.

The tailor ant (Oecophylla smaragdina) and a few other ants (polyrhina) are unique among all the earth's creatures, so far as is known, in that they use their young as tools in nest construction.

Few adult insects spin silk, but the larvae of many have this ability to enclose themselves in silken cocoons, from which they will later emerge as fully formed adults. Oecophylla utilizes this accomplishment of its young in making its nests. Scientists have often torn one of the leaves that form its box-shaped nest and they watched the proceeding.

At first there is a wild sortle on the part of the ants, all in fighting mood. They cannot sting, but they bite annoyingly. After they have given up trying to find and destroy the intruder, worker ants seize larvae in their mandibles and bring them to the damaged portions.

Then the workers seize the edges of the leaves and pull them together, while those with the larvae pass them back and forth, stimulating the grub to exude silk, which silken holds the pieces of the leaves together.

Live in the Tree Tops.

In the Solomon Islands this peculiar Oecophylla abounds. On the island of Malapunta an ant hunter had for two weeks the unusual and delightful good fortune for a naturalist of being able to collect among the tops of high trees. A plantation company was felling its original forest, clearing the way for coconuts. One enormous tree after another was felled, and as soon as it came down he would go among the upper branches and collect.

Oecophylla was abundant, and he reported that there was scarcely a moment of daylight during those two weeks when an ant was not sitting on his neck. He would instinctively reach up and seize the little creature, break its neck between his thumb and forefinger, and go on collecting.

But once, as he crushed one of them, he noticed that it was unusually hard. It was another ant, a Podomyrma, rare and desirable. After that it was necessary for him to seize each attacking ant and carefully examine it before destroying it, so as not to crush a valuable specimen by mistake.

## Somewhere the Sun Shines

By MARTIE RAMSON  
© McClure Newspaper Syndicate, WNU Service.

**G**EORGE SPENCER was the last man in the world Ted Harris had ever dreamed of meeting when he walked up to the refreshment stand at Antia park. Yet there stood George as big as life, dressed in the customary attire of a soda dispenser, dishing out peanuts, popcorn and soft drinks. As he recognized Ted he forgot all else going on about him and approached him as if he were a ghost. And then—

"Ted, old boy, you of all the fellas turnin' up here. Why, Ted—gee, kid, I'm glad to see ya."

"Hello, George, you old son-of-a-gun. Never expected to find you here," and they were busy for the next few seconds exchanging handshakes and complimenting each other on their appearance.

Yes, it had been four years since Ted and George had been riding for the Fiddler Sprinkles back in the east working together for Old Man Fiddler for two and a half years. There had always been a question as to who was the better man, but never between Ted and George. George would always say they never saw a better rider on the track than Ted Harris and Ted would always say the same about George.

When the old man died and T. V. Aldridge took the stable over, the boys quit. They could never accuse themselves to his methods or his cronies, and when Ted announced his intention of quitting, George went with him. Great friends these two, but like all friends, sooner or later the time came when the boys drifted apart.

Ted remembered reading somewhere about George getting married and had picked up a little information about him around the tracks. He guessed George would make out O. K. He was never a victim of wanderlust as Ted was. Ted couldn't stay in one place any length of time; always wanted to get rambling.

Well, if you ever met an old pal after four years, you can imagine how Ted and George felt.

"I'm guessing four hours the boys lived over the entire time that they rode together."

"But," Ted was saying, "you seem to be doing all right by yourself. George, Ted, how's the Missus and the kid. Or is it kids now?"

"Yeah, there's three kids now, Ted. Two girls and a boy. They're good. Just what a fella needs to keep him hustlin'."

"George, you might be right there, Ted, but you know me; never was much of a home body. I got the old rambling fever out of my system."

"Well, you don't seem to be lookin' the worse for it, Ted. I heard ya was quite a little in Chicago. Last time I asked about ya, Whitey Davis told me he seen ya in Hialeah knockin' them over for a to ya, Ted. You always was the gambler of the combination. Not me, though. I been workin' pretty hard for my end in the last four years. I own a little place now. Ain't much, but I knock out a swell piece of change while it lasts and when it's over, I get me a job in the city till next season. Been doin' O. K. ain't never had no urge to lay a dime on any 'a' the nags. Yes, you always were the gambler of the outfit. Guess that's why you'll always be in the moose while I keep on strugglin'."

Well, there was nothing more to talk about and Ted said something in a voice that he didn't recognize as his own, but having some kind of an appointment in the city and he guessed he'd have to be running along.

"Gee, Ted," said George, "ya come all the way here to see me and the run, here I take up all your time and ya don't get to see a thing."

"Aw, forget it, George. A horse race isn't anything new to me. Be sides, I'll have lots of time to see them again."

"Say, that's right, Ted. Gee, but I'm a fool. All this time 'a' I never even ask ya to come out to the house. Let's make a date for dinner tonight at the house. I'll call up Mildred and . . . Why she'll be tickled to death to see you. You're so sure about tonight, George, I . . ."

"I know you're busy, Ted, but here, suppose ya call me at the house. Here, I'll write the number down. There ya're. Now don't forget, I'll look for ya to call."

With a final handshake and cheery good-bys, the boys parted. Ted and George went back to selling his peanuts, popcorn and soft drinks and Ted went on his way out of the park.

As he went through the gate he took a paper from his pocket and before throwing it away took one last look at it. It read:

"Man wanted: to sell peanuts, popcorn and soft drinks. Apply manager of stand at Santa Antia Race Track."

Decide on Our Wisdom

"As we live we learn," said El Ho, the sage of Chinatown, "and enjoy full liberty to decide for ourselves whether we shall learn wisdom or nonsense."

Plenty Of Free Parking Space For Everybody!

# IT PAYS to SHOP at PL

**SWEET LIFE COFFEE**  
NEW, MODERN VACUUM CAN  
**19c lb.**

**SNOW DRIFT SHORTENING**  
**3 LB. CAN 47c**  
**LIPTON'S TEA YELLOW LABEL**  
**1/2 LB. PKG. 37c**

**SANKA COFFEE**  
LB. CAN **36c**

**MAXWELL HOUSE COFFEE**  
2 LB. CAN **45c**

**FREE!** **WICKY WHEAT!**  
WICKY WHEAT CEREAL BOWL  
When You Buy 3 PACKAGES OF EACH OF THESE 2 CEREALS . . .  
**ALL FOR 19c**  
1 Pkg. Post's Bran Flakes  
1 Pkg. Grape-Nuts Flakes  
1 Bottle Weet's Bowls

**SUN RAYED TOMATO JUICE**  
3 CANS **20c**

**SWEET LIFE MILK**  
TALL CAN **6c**

**WESSON OIL**  
PT. CAN **19c** QT. CAN **37c**

**PARAWAX**  
LB. PKG. **9c**

**FREE** **LARGE 18" x 36"**  
**CANNON TURKISH TOWEL**  
WITH TO WRAPPERS FROM  
**CRYSTAL WHITE SOAP**  
Mall Wrappers to Crystal White, Kansas City, Kansas  
Approved by GOOD HOUSEKEEPING INSTITUTE  
**10 GIANT BARS 33c**

**SWEET LIFE PORK & BEANS** LB. CAN **4**

**SWEET LIFE TUNA FISH** FANCY QUALITY **2 CANS 29**

**SWIFT'S CORNED BEEF** LGE CAN **16**

**MICHIGAN BRAND PEAS** No. 2 CAN **2 CANS 23**

**DOGGIE DINNER** PER CAN **7**

**SERV-U-RITE ASSORTED VEGETABLES** PER CAN **5**

**COLLEGE INN SOUPS** FAMOUS FOR ITS FINE FLAVOR **2 CANS 19**

**MICHIGAN ASPARAGUS** NO. 2 CAN **17**

**BLUE LABEL CHILI SAUCE** LGE BOTTLE **14**

**THE SOAP OF BEAUTIFUL WOMEN CAMAY SOAP** 3 BARS **14**

**SWEET LIFE TOILET TISSUE** PER ROLL **5**

**CUBE STEAKS** QUALITY BEEF **19c** **Lb.**

**BOILING BEEF** lean and meaty, lb. **9 1/2c**  
**GROUND BEEF** Fresh, lb. **10c**  
**FRESH PORK HOCKS** lb. **10c**  
**PORK STEAK** fresh, lean, meaty, lb. **19c**  
**FRESH SLICED LIVER** lb. **10c**  
**PURE LARD** lb. **11 1/2c**

**POT ROAST OF BEEF** Fancy, Yearling Steers Lower Cuts  
Armour's SUGAR CURED Bacon Squares Cello-Wrapped lb. **17c**  
Armour's SUGAR CURED Sliced Bacon Fancy lb. **27c**  
**PORKER-WEBB** SUGAR CURED Smoked Ham

**LEG OF LAMB** Genuine Spring Lb. **23c**  
**GENUINE HADDOCK FILLETS** 2 lb. **29c**

**OLD DUTCH** **ASK HOW YOU MAY SECURE WM. A. ROGERS AT HIS QUALITY SILVERWARE STORE BY OHIO, LTD.**  
**PAC**  
**2502**