

Are Ants Picky?



Do ants prefer a certain food over another?

ABSTRACT

I was curious if ants could be as picky as humans might be when it comes to food. So I came up with the topic Are Ants Picky.? I used five different types of foods two sweet and three savory. Over the course of several days I observed the ants eating the different foods to see which they would prefer. With my hypothesis in mind that they would be drawn to the sweet foods opposed to the savory.

HYPOTHESIS

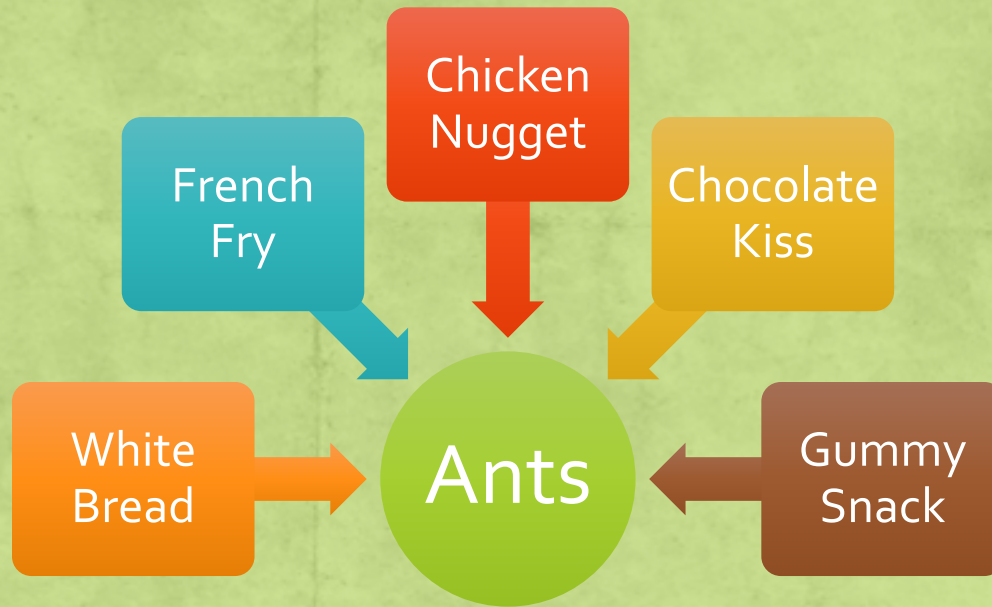
- I believe ants will be picky and select the sugary foods over the savory because sugar gives energy that they need to work, ants are very active builders and need sustained energy for that.

MATERIALS

- Ants
- Ant Farm
- Dirt (from outside)
- Magnifying glass
- White Bread
- French Fries
- Chicken Nugget
- Chocolate Kiss
- Gummy Snack (Welch's)

PROCEDURE

In the purchased ant farm, I put the ants my grandfather collected for me (so I wouldn't get bit). I added different foods daily and observed the ants closely to see what they would do, if they would be more attracted to the sugary foods or savory. I observed them eating the different foods for several days and, recorded my data accordingly.



- The first week I added in a piece of white bread they ate that almost immediately.
- The second week I added in a French fry and Chicken Nugget. They ate the Chicken Nugget completely. The French Fry they buried it and only ate a few bites it looked like.
- The third week I added in chocolate kiss, as they seemed a bit excited when I placed this in after a few days I noticed they had barely even touched it.
- The final week I added in a Welch's Gummy snack they absolutely disliked it.

PHOTOS



Ants Day 1 In Farm



Chicken Nugget & French Fry



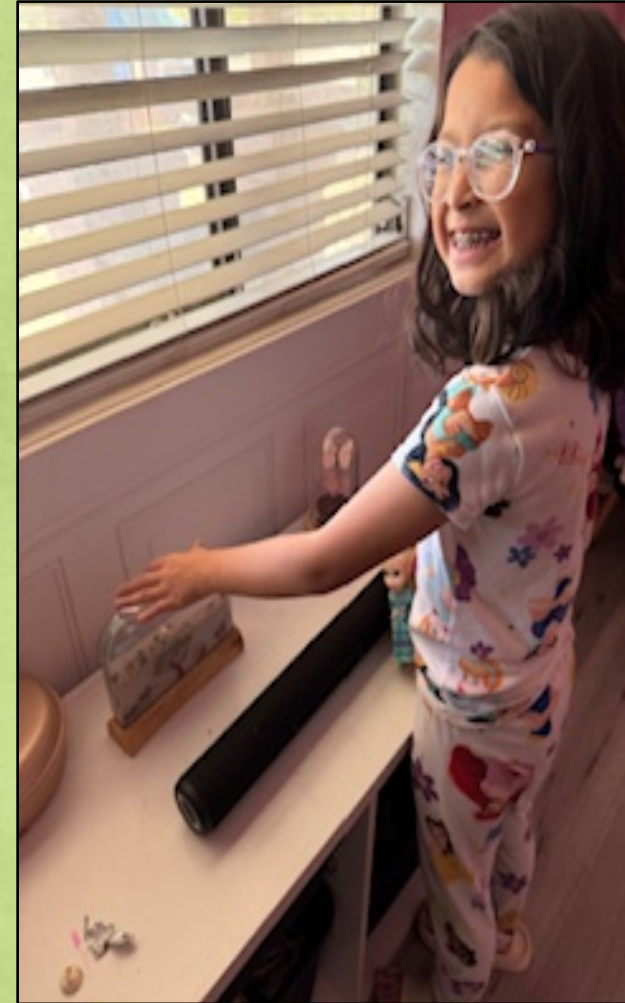
Chocolate Kiss



White Bread

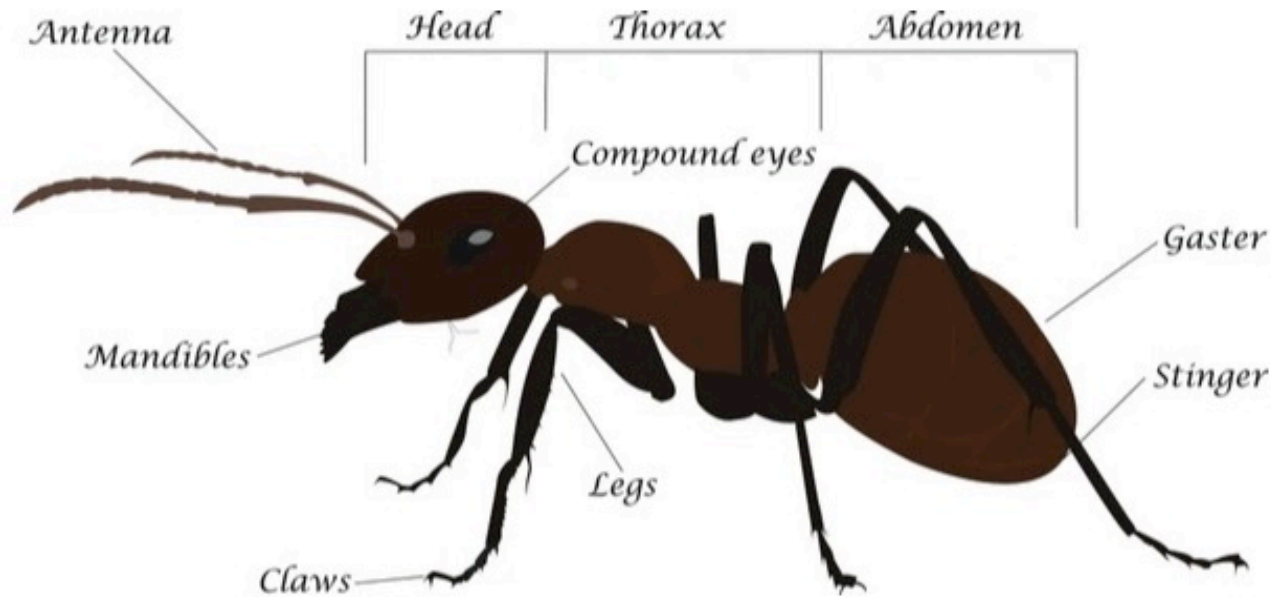


Gummy Snack



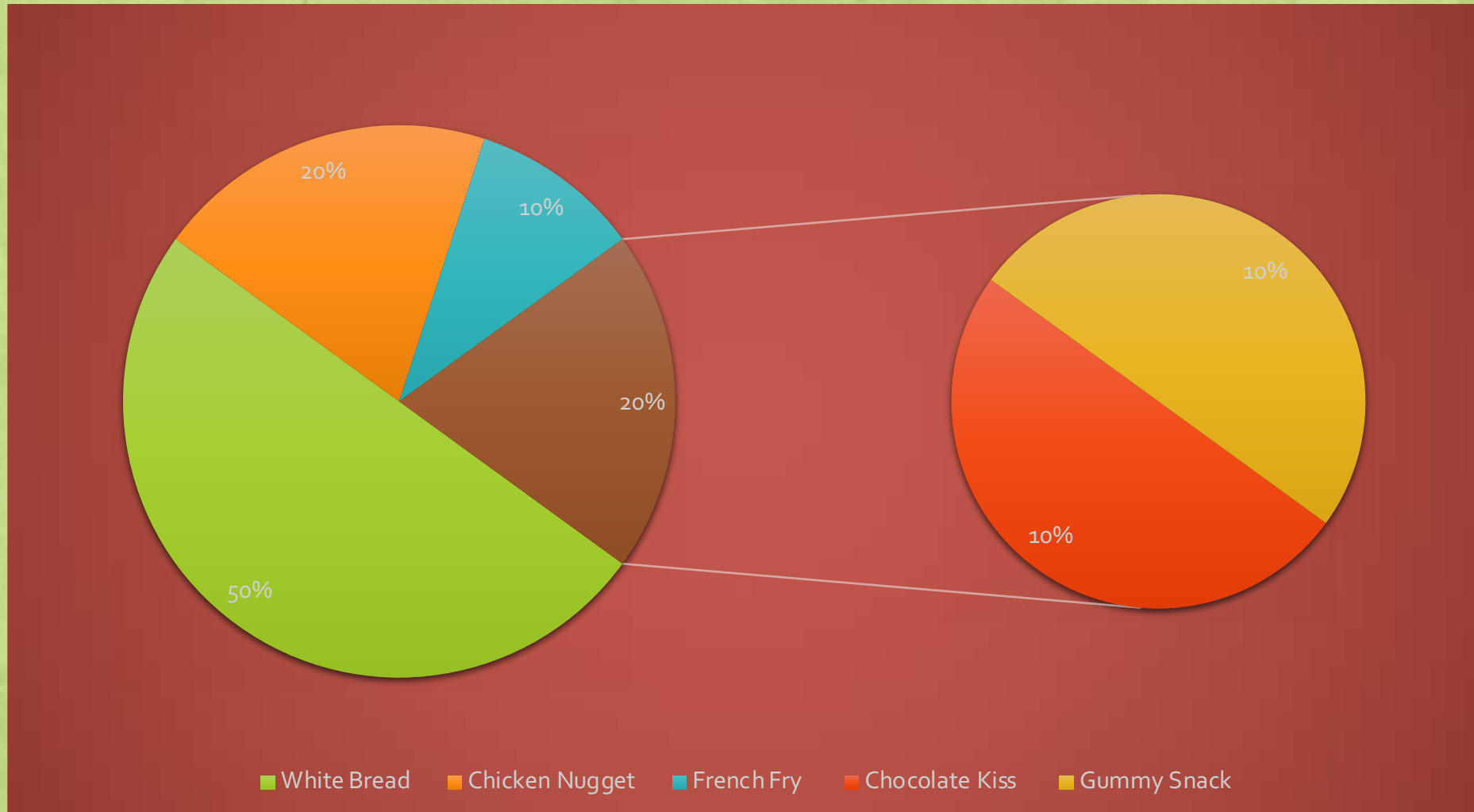
Feeding Ants

DID YOU KNOW.????



- An ant can carry 10-50 times it's own weight.
- Ants do not have ears and hear by feeling vibrations in the ground through their feet.
- Worker ants live for a few weeks to several months.
- Ant predators included spiders, birds, lizards and beetles, and so much more.
- Ants have two stomachs one for their own food and the other to store food for sharing with other colony members.

GRAPH



RESULTS

The results of my project were the following. The ants preferred the white bread and breading from the chicken nugget the best. They did not care for the Chocolate Kiss and Gummy Snack nor the French fry as I thought they would. They were much more energetic after eating the savory food. I believe they need the energy they get from these carbs to perform the work/task they do on a daily basis.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion my hypothesis was incorrect, I expected the ants to be drawn more towards the sugary foods (Chocolate Kiss, Welch's Gummy Snack) opposed to the savory food which included (White bread, Chicken Nugget, and French Fry). Perhaps I was thinking like a child (as I am) that we might all pick sweet foods over savory if given the chance. Who doesn't love a sweet treat, but like our parents say too much sugar isn't good for you. We need food in order to have the energy we need throughout the day. That applies to us as well as ants.

RESEARCH PAPER

Ants are insects of the Formicidae family which means they are related to bees and wasps. Ants form colonies and make tunnels or nests that consist of millions of ants. In today's world it's not uncommon to hear that children as well as adults are picky eaters, but have you ever thought to yourself if animals might also be picky eaters? According to studies for every human on earth there are estimated to be about 2.5 million ants. Could you imagine the amount of food they might collect daily, you would think they would not care what they were eating as long as they found something. They can't walk into a grocery store and pick what they want like most of us have the privilege to, but you might be surprised what they do pick.

RESEARCH PAPER

Imagine millions of tunnels right under your feet. In an ant colony there is a queen ant and the rest are workers, she is the only one in the colony everyone else job is to provide and take care of the queen. With my hypothesis in mind I thought they would be more attracted to sugary foods, but to my surprise they preferred carbs like white bread which when you think about it does turn into sugar but not the type of sugar I was expecting them to go after. Carbs provide an immediate source of energy for active ants. With the fast-acting energy from carbs they eat they can efficiently perform tasks and help the rest of the colony. Just as we need healthy foods for our body's to be able to be productive throughout the day, ants need more than just a sugary treat.

Bibliography

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