



Tropical Factsheets

Ant facts

- Australia's **biggest** and most primitive ants, the Bulldog Ants (or jumper ants), live in the bases of epiphytic ferns in the rainforest canopy and forage on tree trunks at night.
- Other ants live in crevices in **trees**, like the Bumpy Satinash. The tree benefits from nutrients which the ants bring in.
- Ants eat many **seeds**, especially those of eucalypts.
- Attached to the seeds of some plants is a nutrient-rich food parcel called an **elaiosome**. The ants to carry the seeds back to their **nests**, **eat** the **elaiosome** and discard the seed.
- The seeds **germinate** safely in the ants' nutrient-rich waste heap.
- Acacias and other plants have small nectar-producing glands on their branches. These '**nectaries**' attract ants which then protect the trees from attack from other insects.
- Many ants smear themselves with a substance which is an **antibiotic** to prevent disease breaking out in their colonies.
- If a pollen grain comes into contact with this substance, it dies quickly, so ants are generally **not** good pollinators.
- Colonies are extended families and the members are all children of **one queen**.