

Airliner



This Boeing 777 jetliner soared silently over Ottawa West one August afternoon. It appeared briefly in our sky - long enough to get one shot - and then it was gone. The contrails consist of millions of tiny ice crystals that form when moisture in the exhaust contacts the frigid stratospheric air. Bon Voyage.

Anthers



These reproductive machines belong to a Hibiscus growing in a neighbour's flower garden.

Ants



Ants scavenge for food to take back to their nests. This one found a dying Shad Fly that I was watching on our front walk. The ant wasted no time: she bit the fly's head - and kept biting until the beleaguered creature stopping fluttering. She then dragged the carcass back to its nest.

Ants



One can't help but notice that ants never fall from their frequently precarious perches on stems, leaves, and blossoms, so I asked Google and learned this: "Ants that live on trees tend to be excellent climbers. They have tiny, hooked claws at the ends of the feet which help them walk on the under-sides of leaves and limbs. Much like a human rock climber uses a hook, ants use their claws to cling to jagged features."

<http://earthsky.org/earth/how-do-ants-walk-upside-down>

Ants



“Ants (and other social Hymenoptera) use their mandibles to carry food and nest material. Their mandibles are like arms. They have other mouth parts ... that perform more delicate work, e.g a worker ‘licking’ up sugar water, or hemolymph*, is using its palps** and other mouth parts.

(<http://antfarm.yuku.com/1878#.UvG1qOp3teU>

<http://earthsky.org/earth/how-do-ants-walk-upside-down>

*The circulatory fluid of certain invertebrates, analogous to blood in arthropods and to lymph in other invertebrates.

** Either of a pair of sensory appendages that arise from the mouthparts of crustaceans and insects.)

Ants



This ant was dragging a keratin carapace back to the nest. According to the University of California at San Diego, ants chew the keratin and feed it to their larvae.

(I found an interesting site that features excellent photographs of ants:
<http://www.alexanderwild.com/Ants/Taxonomic-List-of-Genera/Formica/i-PJwXxsc/A>)

Ants



Ahhh, sweet Portulaca. Do flowers like ants as pollinators? Not always. According to pollinators.blogspot.ca: “Some plants resort to extrafloral nectaries, nectar-producing glands located in other plant parts, to attract ants and keep them, and other nectar robbers, away from the valuable treasure reserved for legitimate pollinators.” (<http://pollinators.blogspot.ca/2012/10/ants-unlikely-pollinators.html>)

Ants and Aphids



Aphid Husbandry. In return for protection from predators, aphids supply ants with nectar. To drink, an ant strokes an aphid's back, and is rewarded with a droplet of sweet liquid. When an aphid's well of sap dries up, or turns sour, an ant will promptly pick it up and move it to a more productive, and sweeter, location.

Aphids without Ants



Aphis Fabae

Aphids Galore. A plant, I think, not long for this meadow.
The larger specimens are Brown Ambrosia; the others
might be Black Beans.



Aphid



Algonquin Park



Automobile



Autumn Leaves

