



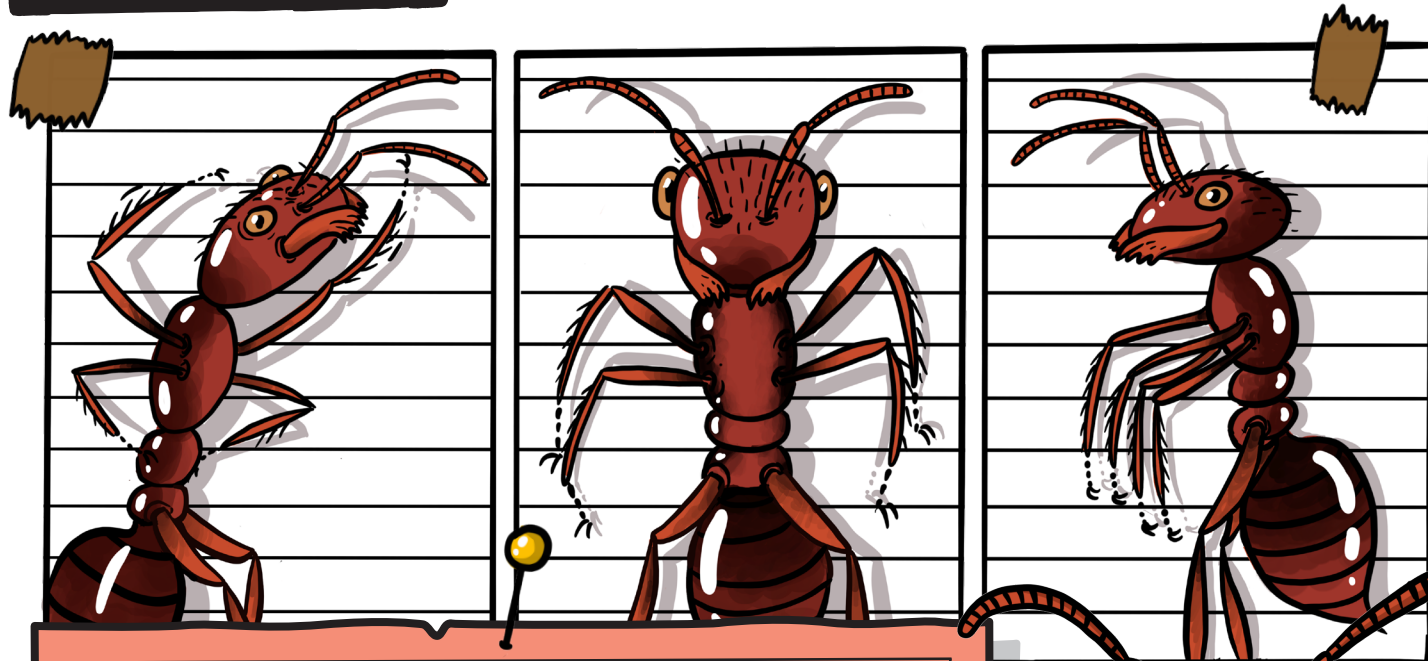
Investigation Underway

PESTIES



Illustrated by
**Anna Años
Kubecová**

WANTED RED IMPORTED FIRE ANT



Length: 1.5–5 mm Colour: mostly brown shades
 Lifespan: 30–180 days, 2–6 years for the queen
 Weapons: mandibles, sting with a poison sac
 Crimes: stinging, biting, digging
 Turf: buildings, gardens, electric appliances
 Nationality: Central and South America, parts of North America, parts of Asia, Australia, New Zealand, a few Caribbean islands
 Special characteristics: the queen has wings during the mating season



OUCH!

They aren't exactly the meekest of creatures. Whenever the fancy strikes them to attack and eat something or someone, they do. Ants even have the guts to attack people. Don't worry, they won't gobble you up, but you will have some very painful bites.

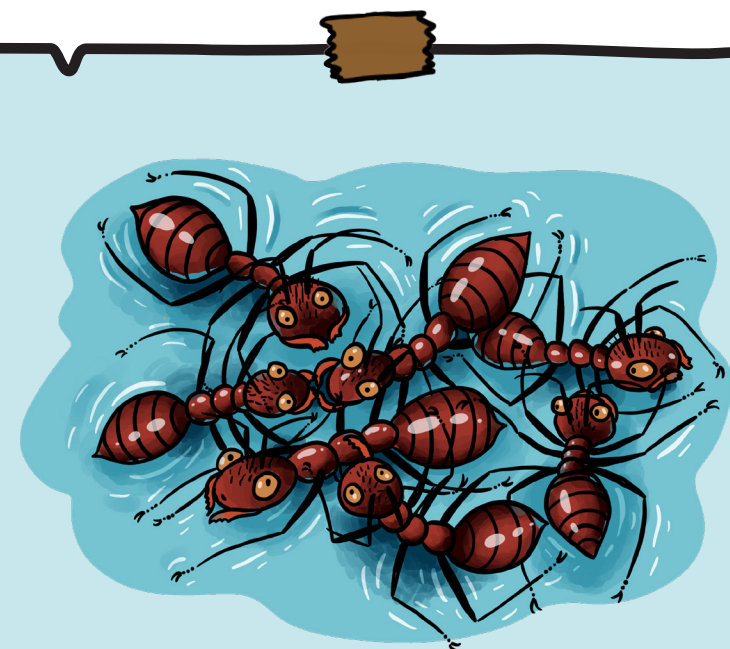
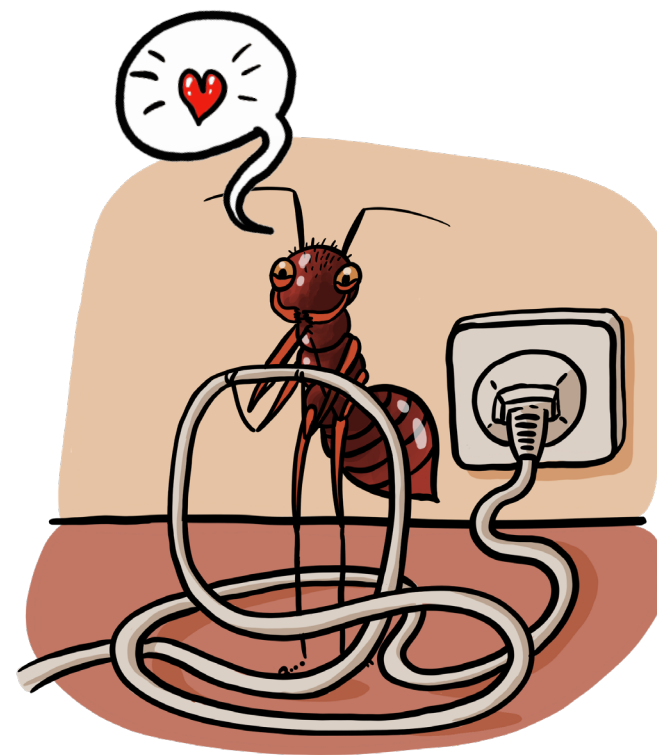


MONUMENTAL COMMUNITY

Just like other ants, fire ants live in large families – colonies. A single colony can have up to 400 000 members! It consists of workers, soldiers, males, and a queen. Their dwellings are enormous, but while digging their underground tunnels, ants can cause structural damage to houses where people live.

YIPPEE, GUYS, ELECTRICITY!

Fire ants are fascinated with the electromagnetic field that surrounds electric appliances, luring and attracting more and more ants. They don't treat the appliances with scrupulous care, though, and destroy them instead. In the worst case scenario, a fire can break out.



WHAT TO DO?

Be careful. Dealing with these ants is very, very difficult. They can handle pretty much anything. Fire ants can also form living bridges or floating islands, meaning that water doesn't catch them unawares either. They hold onto one another with their legs and mandibles, their hairs full of air bubbles – and on they go.

WANTED NORTHERN RACCOON



Length: 40–72 cm Weight: 3.5–9 kg
 Colour: grey, with black spots Lifespan: 3 years
 in the wild, up to 20 years in captivity
 Weapons: nimble paws, sharp teeth and claws
 Crimes: plunder and robbery
 Turf: near waste dumps, orchards,
 henhouses, households
 Nationality: North and Central America,
 parts of Europe, small regions in Asia
 Special characteristics: black face mask
 Mitigating circumstances: helps with small
 animal control and plant dissemination

FAVOURITE FOOD? JUST ABOUT ANYTHING, REALLY!

Raccoons love to eat till they're bursting. They're very persistent while searching for food, and gobble up everything that can be gobbled up as soon as they find it. Garbage or fresh food - doesn't matter. When it comes to plants, maize and fruits are especially yummy. Whenever raccoons are hungry for something animal-based, they go pillage the nearest henhouse.



HYGIENE ABOVE ALL

A peculiar habit can be observed with raccoons - they dip their food in water. Zoologists have been wracking their brains for an explanation. Maybe this makes their paws softer and helps them grope around better; maybe they like to imagine that they've just caught their food in a water course. At any rate, their love of washing their food caused people of many different nations to give them a name which reflects this strange hobby.



I'LL BE DAMNED IF I CAN'T GET IN...

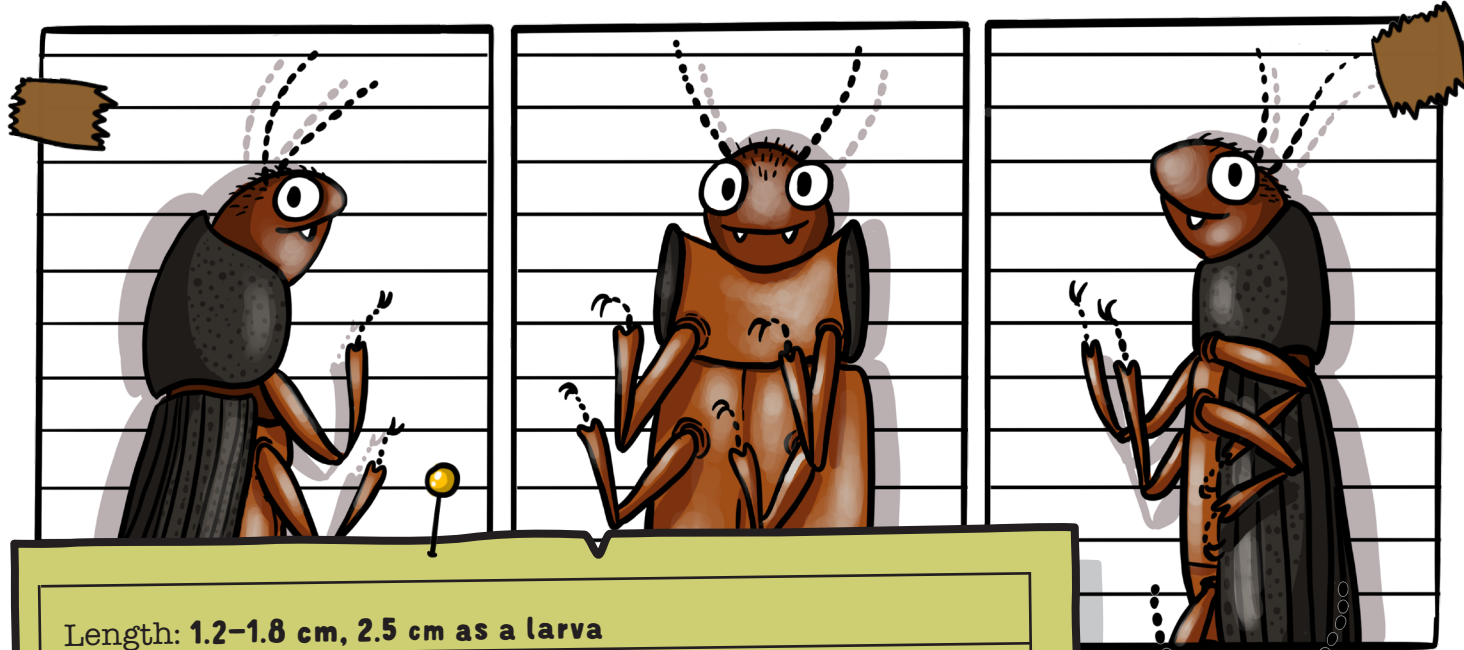
While snooping around, raccoons often try to get inside human dwellings. It probably won't come as a surprise that they love barns, kitchens, and pantries most of all. But sometimes they miscalculate... and become stuck! Air conditioning pipes or flues are one of the frequent traps. If this occurs, someone has to take pity on the poor raccoon and set it free.

WHAT TO DO?

Unless you want raccoons to pay you an unexpected visit, you should take care to always close all windows and doors at night. And to avoid drawing them in unnecessarily, you definitely shouldn't feed wild raccoons that are roaming around your house.



WANTED MEALWORM BEETLE

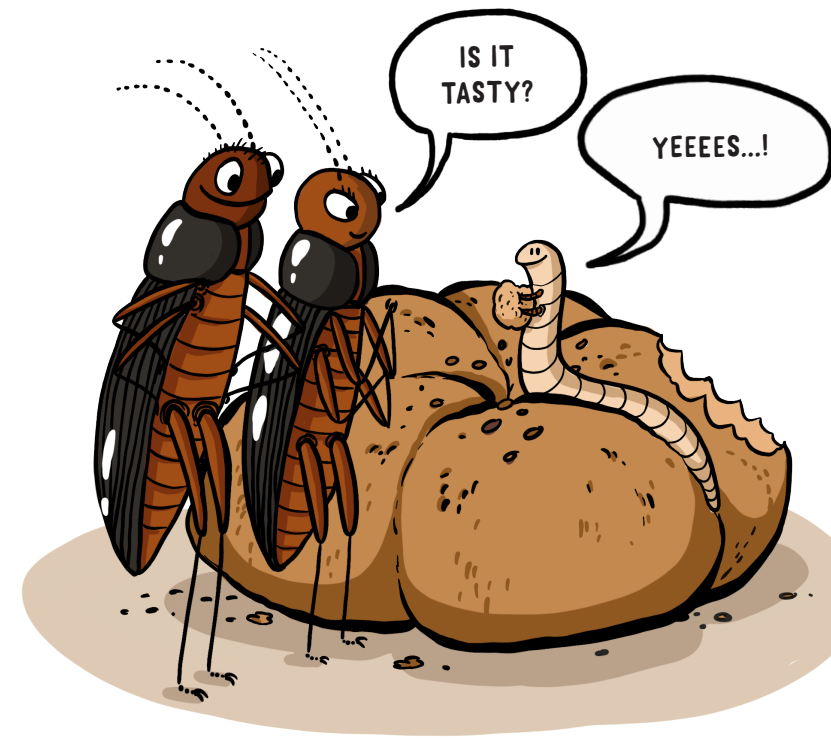
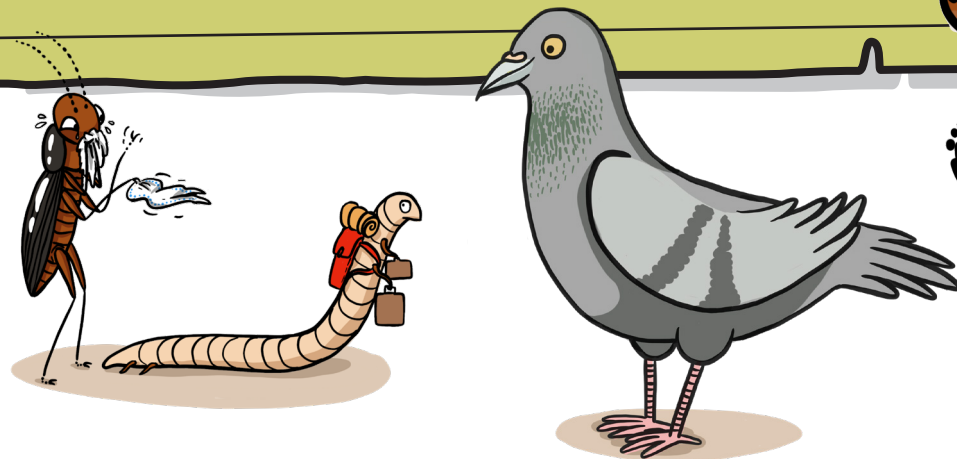


Length: 1.2–1.8 cm, 2.5 cm as a larva
 Colour: black, brown as a larva
 Lifespan: ca 3 months, 360–500 days as a larva
 Weapons: hungry mouth Crimes: gobbling and eating
 Turf: kitchens, pantries, storehouses, mills, granaries, rendering plants Nationality: basically all over the world
 Special characteristics: attracted to light
 Mitigating circumstances: helps decompose plant materials in the wild

Alias:
Tenebrio molitor

A CAB, PLEASE!

Adult mealworms are excellent flyers. Larvae, however, can't fly – they have no wings! To be able to see and expand into the world, they use two types of taxi service – human transport (taking a comfortable ride with transported goods), or birds, their feathered buddies.



GLUTEN-FREE DIET NOT AN OPTION

If they fall on hard times, mealworms can survive up to four months without food. But if the opportunity arises, they love to stuff themselves full, adults and larvae alike. They enjoy grains most of all, along with flour, baked goods, bran, groats, or rice. The havoc they wreak in storehouses is especially nasty.

DELICIOUS!

You may have heard of flour-worms, or rather that they're a good treat for many animals, and increasingly for people. Flour-worms are mealworm larvae. You could say it's a food of the future: it's low-calorie and contains many beneficial substances.



WHAT TO DO?

If you aren't growing mealworms intentionally and don't want them to feast on your food, there's a pretty simple advice – get some glass or porcelain jars with good lids. They'll keep hungry insects at bay.



Investigation Underway

PESTIES

Attention, please! An investigation is underway. We are searching for animals of weird and wonderful shapes, with odd body markings, thieving paws, greedy beaks and sharp fangs. Their territory takes in our pantries and gardens, even our bedrooms. We encounter them all over the world. Of many different kinds, they form a dreadful band of damage-doers. Open this book and learn about all the mischief caused by certain creatures when they get close to us.



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Author: Tomáš Filipi, Sabina Konečná
Illustrator: Anna Años Kubecová
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