Name: _____ Date: _____

Weaver Ants Stitch Leaves With Living Thread

Circle group

High in tropical trees, weaver ants live in nests made of leaves. They have no tools, and they cannot sew. But they found a way to stitch leaves together. They use their own young.

First, workers find two leaves that are close. Some ants grip the edge of one leaf and pull. If the gap is too wide, the ants form a living chain. One ant holds the leaf. The next ant holds on to her waist, and so on, until the leaves come together.

Then comes the clever part. Weaver ant larvae can make silk, and the adults cannot. A worker picks up a larva in her jaws and carries it along the seam. She taps the larva's head on one leaf and then the other. Each time, a thin thread of silk is left behind. The silk holds the leaves together.

When many leaves are joined, they make a roomy nest. A tree may hold many nests, and the colony lives in all of them. The ants also defend the tree against other insects.

The workers have the strength. The larvae have the glue.

Questions

1. What are weaver ant nests made of?

_____

_____

2. How do ants pull leaves together when the gap is wide?

_____

_____

3. Which ants can make the silk?

_____

_____

4. How does a worker use a larva to join leaves?

_____

_____

5. Why do the workers have the strength and the larvae the glue?

_____

_____

6. What else do the ants do for the tree?

_____

_____

Words to know

tropical: from the hot, rainy parts of the world
grip: to hold on tightly
seam: the line where two pieces are joined
larvae: young insects that look like worms
colony: a large group of animals living together

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Weaver Ants Stitch Leaves With Living Thread

Triangle group

High in tropical trees, weaver ants live in nests made of leaves, and although they have no tools and cannot sew, they have found a way to stitch leaves together using their own young.

First, a group of workers finds two leaves that are close together. Some ants grip the edge of one leaf and pull. If the gap is too wide, ants form a living chain. One ant holds the edge of the leaf, and the next ant holds on to her waist, and so on, until the leaves come together.

Then comes the clever part. Weaver ant larvae can make silk, although the adults cannot, so a worker picks up a larva in her jaws and carries it along the seam. She taps the larva's head against one leaf and then the other, and each time a thin thread of silk is left behind. Back and forth the worker goes until the silk holds the leaves together.

When many leaves are joined, they form a roomy nest the size of a ball. A tree may hold many nests, and the colony lives in all of them. The ants also defend the tree against other insects.

It is an unusual team. The workers have the strength, and the larvae have the glue.

Questions

1. What are weaver ant nests made of?

_____

_____

2. How do ants pull leaves together when the gap is wide?

_____

_____

3. Which ants can make the silk?

_____

_____

4. How does a worker use a larva to join leaves?

_____

_____

5. Why does the passage say the workers have the strength and the larvae have the glue?

_____

_____

6. What else do the ants do for the tree they live in?

_____

_____

Words to know

tropical: from the hot, rainy parts of the world
grip: to hold on tightly
seam: the line where two pieces are joined
larvae: young insects that look like worms
colony: a large group of animals living together

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Weaver Ants Stitch Leaves With Living Thread

Square group

High in the canopy of tropical trees, weaver ants dwell in nests constructed entirely of leaves. They possess no tools, and they are incapable of sewing. Nevertheless, they have discovered a way to stitch leaves together using their own young.

First, a group of workers locates two leaves that lie close to one another. Some ants grip the edge of one leaf and pull. If the gap is too wide, the ants form a living chain, in which one ant holds the edge of the leaf and the next ant clings to her waist, and so on, until the leaves are drawn together.

Then comes the clever part. Weaver ant larvae are able to produce silk, but the adults are not. A worker lifts a larva in her jaws and carries it along the seam. She taps the larva's head against one leaf and then the other, and each time a thin thread of silk is left behind. Back and forth the worker travels, and the silk binds the leaves firmly in place.

When many leaves are joined, they form a roomy nest about the size of a ball. A single tree may hold many such nests, and the colony lives in all of them. The ants also defend the tree against other insects.

It is an unusual partnership. The workers supply the strength, and the larvae supply the glue.

Questions

1. What are weaver ant nests constructed from?

_____

_____

2. How do ants draw leaves together when the gap is too wide?

_____

_____

3. Which ants are able to produce the silk?

_____

_____

4. How does a worker use a larva to join leaves?

_____

_____

5. Why does the passage say the workers supply the strength and the larvae supply the glue?

_____

_____

6. What else do the ants do for the tree they live in?

_____

_____

Words to know

tropical: from the hot, rainy parts of the world
grip: to hold on tightly
seam: the line where two pieces are joined
larvae: young insects that look like worms
colony: a large group of animals living together

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: Weaver Ants Stitch Leaves With Living Thread

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: Weaver Ants Stitch Leaves With Living Thread

Easier · 186 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 2.2

1. Leaves stitched together.
2. They form a living chain, each ant holding on to the one before.
3. The larvae.
4. She carries it along the seam and taps its head on each leaf, leaving silk.
5. The workers pull the leaves, and the larvae make the silk that holds them.
6. They defend it against other insects.

Triangle: Weaver Ants Stitch Leaves With Living Thread

This passage · 213 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 4.8

1. Leaves stitched together.
2. They form a living chain, each ant holding on to the one before.
3. The larvae.
4. She carries it along the seam and taps its head on each leaf, leaving silk behind.
5. The workers pull the leaves, and the larvae make the sticky silk that holds them.
6. They defend it against other insects.

Square: Weaver Ants Stitch Leaves With Living Thread

Harder · 230 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 5.4

1. Leaves stitched together.
2. They form a living chain, each ant clinging to the one before her.
3. The larvae.
4. She carries it along the seam and taps its head against each leaf, leaving silk behind.
5. The workers pull the leaves together, and the larvae make the silk that binds them.
6. They defend it against other insects.