

## Instructions for Collecting Ants Using Peanut Butter Baited Chopsticks

**\*PLEASE READ BEFORE YOU ATTEMPT TO COLLECT ANTS\***

**\*IF YOU ARE ALLERGIC, OR YOU SUSPECT YOU MAY BE ALLERGIC, TO BEE OR WASP STINGS, PLEASE ASK FOR HELP FROM YOUR PARENTS, OR REFRAIN FROM THIS ACTIVITY COMPLETELY\*** You will be assigned a short written research project as a substitute activity.

- 1) Do not wear loose clothing, slippers or a watch. The ants can get trapped and caught in this attire. Wear clothing with short sleeves, closed toe shoes and remove your watch or jewelry.
- 2) Decide beforehand where you will place the chopsticks. Good places for sampling ants are beneath trees and shrubs, in or under potted outdoor plants (especially new plantings or “fish-tail” palms), near garbage cans or buildings, or where you have seen ants before.
- 3) Although ants may nest in wet areas, they usually will not forage, or be attracted to bait, in very wet weather. Try baiting for ants on a fair day, but not in direct sunlight.
- 4) Dip half of the chopstick in peanut butter, leaving the other half free of peanut butter. You will need to pick up the chopsticks later, so you need to grab a clean area that will be free of ants. You do not need very much peanut butter! Just a light coating will be enough to attract ants, if they are present.
- 5) Place stick on or into the ground at a suitable location. Peanut butter should be in contact with the ground.
- 6) Wait 1-2 hours before collecting sticks. Ants need time to find baits and recruit nestmates.
- 7) Before picking up a chopstick, first observe closely. Do you see ants or other arthropods? What do they look like? How do they behave? Then carefully pick up chopstick and drop into **large** ziploc bag. If you have captured ants, seal the bag between collections so that ants cannot escape.
- 8) When you are finished collecting chopsticks, completely fill out the data sheet (see example at right), drop it inside the **small** ziploc bag with the chopsticks, and put the whole package into the freezer for at least two hours or until you take your sample into class. It is **very important** to provide a valid street address and phone number, in case we find the ant. If you do not wish to divulge this information on your residence, you may collect ants at a different location.
- 9) Return to class with your package. We will identify the ants in our next class session together and you will need your collections. If you do not have ants to sort, you will have another assignment to do! It will be less fun guaranteed!

**Remember:** do not be disappointed if you do not find ants! Because alien little fire ants in Hawaii are considered threats to our unique environment, we hope we do not find many! Ants or no ants, the information is very important—you have contributed **scientific data** towards our conservation biology project! Thank you for your assistance!

### **Student data**

Name Dan Gruner  
School University of Hawaii  
Grade 7<sup>th</sup>  
Class or Period Biology period 2  
Teacher Name Auntie Ant

### **Ant collection data**

Location my house  
Street Address 113741 Ala Ohia St  
Volcano, HI 96785  
Phone # 985-9025  
Date April 14, 2000  
Time put out 11:30 am  
Time collected 1:45 pm  
Describe weather partly cloudy with a few light showers  
Describe locations of chopsticks most were beneath trees, but 2 were in potted plants, 1 was near the garbage cans and 1 was next a rock pile  
Other observations the ants were very tiny, red & moved slowly. Some fell off the chopstick when I put it in the bag.