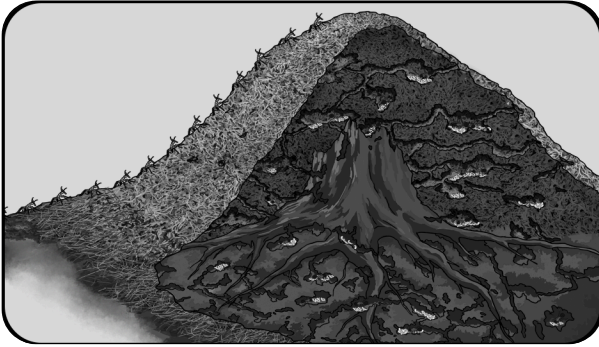
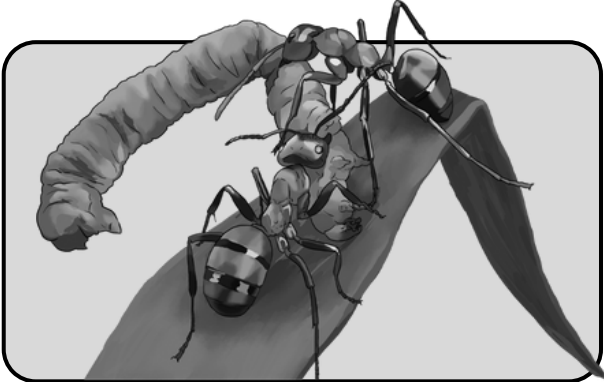


RED WOOD ANTS FORMICA RUFA



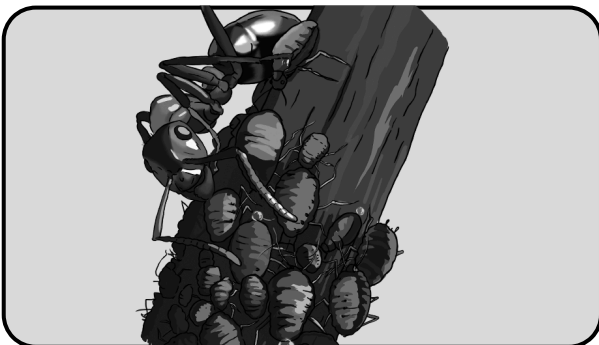
The anthills of **Formica rufa** are impressive structures made of plant material such as needles, twigs and soil. They can reach heights of up to one meter and diameters of several meters. In shady places, the ants often build higher mounds to gather more warmth for the development of their brood.



The red wood ant fulfills important ecological functions in forests. They control insect pests by preying on large numbers of caterpillars and other herbivorous insects such as the bark beetle, thereby protecting trees. Its anthills also provide habitat and food for numerous animal species such as woodpeckers, badgers and various beetles. It ensures an ecological balance, which makes it a key species in many habitats.



By creating mounds and tunnels, moving a lot of soil and plant material, it improves soil quality through aeration and nutrient enrichment. It also plays an important role in spreading plant seeds.



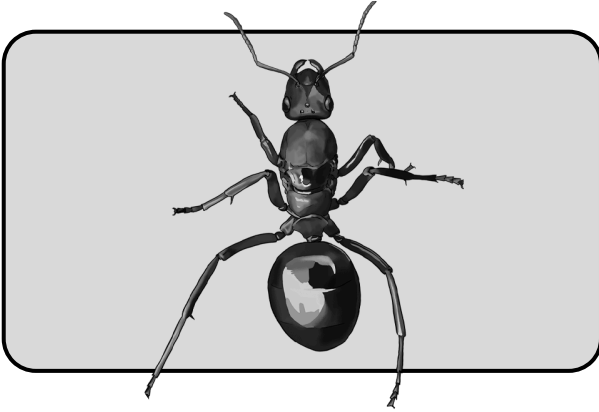
The red wood ant mainly feeds predatorily on small insects and their larvae, such as caterpillars, beetles or flies, which it actively hunts or collects as carrion. In addition, honeydew and plant juices produced by aphids play an important role as a carbohydrate-rich food source. By “milking” the aphids, the ants receive honeydew in exchange for protection from predators.



Brood care is highly developed and organized collectively. Workers take care of the eggs, larvae and pupae. They keep the brood chambers clean, regulate temperature and humidity and feed the larvae with protein-rich food, mainly from captured insects. The brood is relocated within the anthill according to temperature requirements to ensure optimal development conditions.

RED WOOD ANTS

FORMICA RUFA



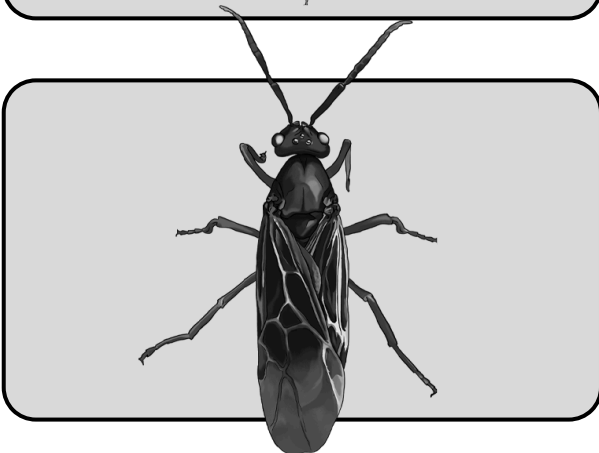
Queen:

- Size: 9-11 mm
- Color: Head and abdomen black, thoracic section reddish to brown-red



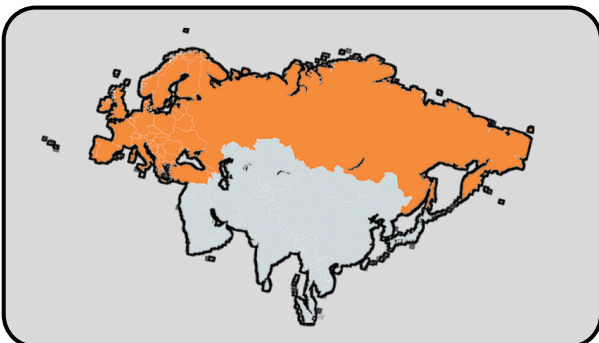
Workers:

- Size: 4.5-9 mm (variable)
- Color: head and abdomen black, thoracic section reddish-brown to red



Males:

- Size: 9-11 mm
- Color: Dark brown to black, with slightly reddish parts, slimmer body shape than queens



Distribution area

- Distributed throughout Europe
- Particularly common in Central and Northern Europe
- Forests and forest edges, preferably coniferous and mixed forests
- Altitudes up to approx. 2000 m
- Prefers sunny, open locations