



# Small Planet Montessori

education for a peaceful planet

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Newsletter — April 2018



### Cool Bird Facts:

- ☀ **Smallest bird** is the Bee Hummingbird at 2.24" and 0.056 oz. <sup>B</sup>
- ☀ **The largest birds** are: heaviest and tallest is the African Ostrich at 345 lb and 9'; heaviest flying bird is the Great Bustard at -46 lb; greatest wingspan is the Wandering Albatross at 11'11". <sup>B</sup>
- ☀ **Longest feathers** belong to the Onagadori, a domestic strain of Red Jungle Fowl, at 34.75". <sup>B</sup>
- ☀ **The most abundant bird** is thought to be the Red-billed Quelea at up to 10 billion. <sup>B</sup>
- ☀ **The smallest egg** is that of the Vervain Hummingbird at 0.39" and 0.0132 oz. <sup>T,B</sup>
- ☀ **The largest egg** is that of the ostrich at 7 x 4.5". <sup>B</sup> One ostrich egg makes the equivalent of a 16-egg omelet!
- ☀ **The fastest bird** is thought to be the diving Peregrine Falcon at 175 mph or more. <sup>T</sup>
- ☀ **The number of bird species** recorded in the continental U.S. and Canada is over 900.
- ☀ **The number of known bird species** in Peru is approaching 2000.
- ☀ **James Bond**: named after the real-life ornithologist and author of *Birds of the West Indies*.
- ☀ **The longest Latin name** of any bird is Griseotyrannus aurantioatrocristatus, or the Crowned Slaty Flycatcher of South America.

Key to citations:

B: The Bird Almanac: The ultimate guide to essential facts and figures of the world's birds by David M. Bird, 1999.

T: The Audubon Society Encyclopedia of North American Birds by John K. Terres, 1996.

### Dear Parents,

After a chilly start it looks like spring has really sprung! Are you ready to 'Spring' to work? Let's hope we don't have too many April Showers! What's growing in the Small Planet garden?

## Africa, birds and ants!

**APRIL WORKS** — This month we have ants, small but mighty (invertebrate of the month) and birds! (vertebrate of the month).

**AFRICA** is Continent of the Month. It is the world's second-largest and second-most-populous continent. At about 30.3 million km<sup>2</sup> (11.7 million square miles)

including adjacent islands, it covers 6% of Earth's total surface area and 20.4 % of its total land area.[2] With 1.2 billion people as of 2016, it accounts for about 16% of the world's human population.

The continent is surrounded by the Mediterranean Sea to the north, the Suez Canal and the Red Sea to the northeast, the Indian Ocean to the southeast, and the Atlantic Ocean to the west. There are 46 countries including Madagascar, and 53 if you include all the island groups. (source:wikipedia)



### Small Planet Business

**Tuition** — A full month's tuition is due on the first of every month. **Please make checks payable to Martha Morgan.**

**Morning lessons** are from 9.00 -11.30 and afternoon lessons 1.00 - 3.30. There is 15 minutes before and after class for drop-off/pick-up. Please observe these times.

**Tiny Treasures** — Any works at home? Bring 'em on back!

**Guest Speakers** — If you would like to share a special interest, hobby or holiday

tradition, please have a word with Martha! The children really love to hear about special ways to celebrate!

**Veronique** — Every Thursday, 1 - 2 p.m. \$10.

**Snack** — Is it your snack day? Please swap with someone if you're going to miss your child's day.

**Lunch Card** — Please remember to keep your lunch card up to date! 20 lunches for \$200.00. Extra time will be charged at \$12.50 per hour.

### News, Dates, & Reminders

- ☀ April 7th Spring Break begins!
- ☀ April 17th Back to school!
- ☀ May 2nd and 3rd— Mothers' Tea
- ☀ Summer School starts Monday June 19th. Please sign up!
- ☀ Registration open for Fall 2017/18
- ☀ Clara's mother has made a Google List—Please check it if you would like to contribute to the Garden Box project

**Lunch** — is 11.30 to 12.30

**Coats!** — Please be sure your child's coat is weather appropriate.

**Friday pick up!** Please collect your child by 3.45 and at 12.45 on Fridays. The school closes for the weekend at 1pm on Friday.

Thank You from Martha for your cooperation!

See you at the gate! — Martha

# Amazing Ants

Ants have been living on the Earth for more than 100 million years and can be found almost anywhere on the planet. It is estimated that there are about 20,000 different species of ants. For this reason ants have been called Earth's most successful species.

Ants build many different types of homes. Many ants build simple little mounds out of dirt or sand. Other ants use small sticks mixed with dirt and sand to make a stronger mound that offers protection from rain.

Western Harvester ants make a small mound on top, but then tunnel up to 15 feet straight down to hibernate during winter. Ant mounds consist of many chambers connected by tunnels. Different chambers are used for nurseries, food storage, and resting places for the worker ants. Some ants live in wood like termites. Army ants don't make a home at all but travel in large

groups searching for food.

**Sociology:** Ants are social insects, which means they live in large colonies or groups. Some colonies consist of millions of ants. There are three types of ants in each species, the queen, the sterile female workers, and males. The male ants only serve one purpose, to mate with future queen ants and do not live very long. The queen grows to adulthood, mates, and then spends the rest of her life laying eggs. A colony may have only one queen, or there may be many queens depending on the species. Ants go through four stages of development: egg, larva, pupa, and adult.

**Anatomy:** Ants have three main parts. The head, the trunk(middle section), and the rear or metasoma. All six legs are attached to the trunk. The head consists of the jaws, eyes, and antennae. The eyes of ants are made up of many lenses enabling them to see movement very well. The antennae are special organs of smell, touch, taste, and hearing. The metasoma contains the stomach and rectum. Many species of ants have poison

sacks and/or stingers in the end of the metasoma for defense against their many predators. To see a diagram and learn more about ant anatomy visit our Ant Anatomy page.

**Organs:** Ants do not have lungs. Oxygen enters through tiny holes all over the body and Carbon Dioxide leaves through the same holes. There are no blood vessels. The heart is a long tube that pumps colorless blood from the head back to the rear and then back up to the head again. The blood kind of coats the insides of the ants and is then sucked into the tube and pumped up to the head again. The nervous system of ants consists of a long nerve cord that also runs from head to rear with branches leading to the parts of the body, kind of like a human spinal cord.

**Communication:** If you watch ants for any length of time you will see that they really do communicate with each other and very effectively too. Ants communicate by touching each other with their antennae. Ants also use chemicals called pheromones to leave scent trails for other ants to follow.

Source:

[www.antsalive.com](http://www.antsalive.com)

