

Meet Natasha, the travelling entomologist! She loves insects, and would like to share her wisdom with you!



Ento-Club is funded by the Royal Entomological Society

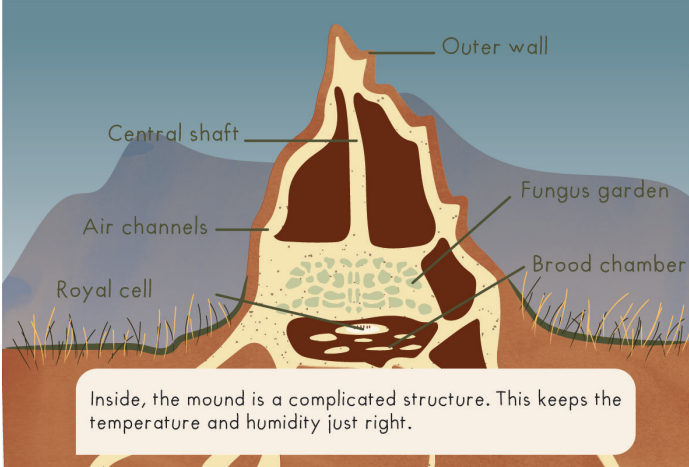
SOMEWHERE IN THE AFRICAN SAYANNA...



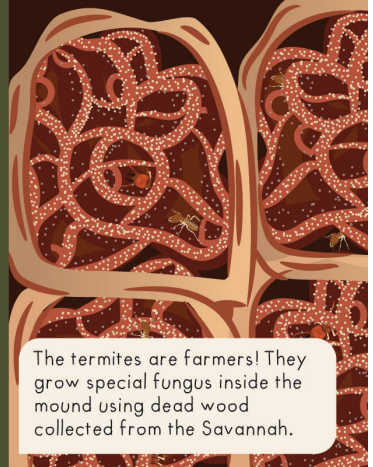
Look how tall this *Macrotermes* termite mound is! They can build them up to 5m tall.



Here are the defenders of the mound: the soldiers. Check out those jaws! They protect the whole colony.



Inside, the mound is a complicated structure. This keeps the temperature and humidity just right.



The termites are farmers! They grow special fungus inside the mound using dead wood collected from the Savannah.



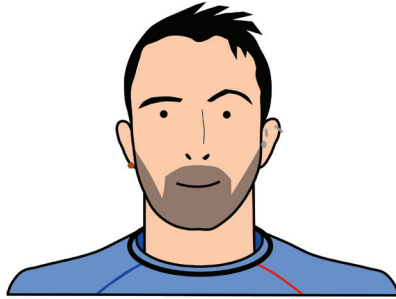
The queen can live for 20 years and lays 20 000 eggs a day!



Termites recycle nutrients and minerals across the savanna. This means they are interconnected with everything - from insects to impalas.

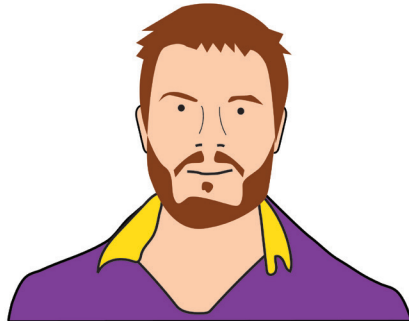
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TOM



I am fascinated by patterns in insect diversity! Most of my research looks at ants. Where I grew up in south Wales, there are only 3 different ant species. In the UK there are over 40! Where I now work, in the Drakensberg Mountains of southern Africa, there are over 90 species in a single valley! My experiments look at how ants cope with different temperatures along mountain ranges so that we can try to understand these big differences in species diversity across the world.

RUDI



The worldwide diversity of insects is astounding and new species are being discovered every year! I am interested in the evolution of new insect species and I use flies to understand the genetic processes that cause one species to split into two. I am also interested in entomophagy, which means studying how people use insects as food. The diversity of insects that are used as food and examining the nutritional quality of different species is a particular focus of my research.

