



Build Your Own Leafcutter Ant

Leafcutter ants roam the rainforests of the Americas, carrying leaves sometimes over 20 times their body weight. These heavy lifters make their home on the forest floor, busying themselves to help feed their colony of millions. This activity will help you build your own larger-than-life leafcutter ant using materials that you can find in any local park or forest.

Materials

Leafcutter ant template (page 2)
Rocks, twigs, and leaves
Glue

Directions

1. **Print** the leafcutter ant template on the next page.
2. **Find** 3 rocks or large pieces of bark, 5 small sticks, and a big leaf (or a bunch of smaller leaves). These will represent the ant's 3 body parts: the head, thorax, and abdomen. **Glue** each piece onto the outline of your ant.
3. **Glue** 2 smaller sticks on top of the head for the antennae. If the sticks are too long, break them apart to the right sizes so they match the leg outlines.
4. **Glue** 3 sticks on the outlines of the legs. (Like all insects, leafcutter ants have 6 legs, however since you are building only one side of the ant, place 3 legs on the template).
5. **Glue** the big leaf (or bunch of smaller leaves) onto the leaf outline.
6. **Color** the blank background. Is the ant walking up a hill? Is it on a tree branch? Is it surrounded by more leaves or a bright blue sky?
7. *Challenge:*
Find and **use** different materials to build your ant. What else could you use for the ant's leg or antennae? What about the body?



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