

Schoolyard safari

Indigenous perspectives curriculum links

Engage

Lesson 1 In the yard

Insects have played an important part in the culture of Indigenous people for many thousands of years. Extensively used for their food, medicine and as part of their cultural beliefs, these insects include the Bogong moth, witjuti (witchetty) grub, honeypot ant and native bee for its sugarbag (honey).

- Display pictures or drawings of some of the insects that are a part of Indigenous culture. Discuss and group according to the students' ideas.

For images see <http://www.csiro.au/places/ANIC.html>

For further information see http://www.insects.org/ced1/aust_abor.html

Explore

Lesson 2 Wiggly worms

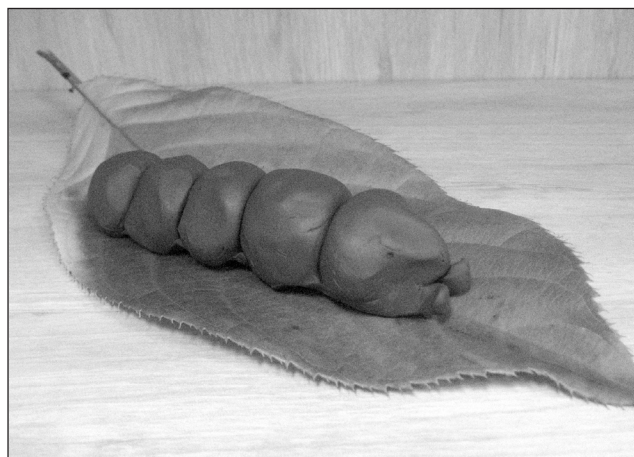
The witjuti (witchetty) grub is the larvae of cossid moths and is found in the roots of several desert plants. The grub is a principal food source (bush tucker) for Indigenous people living in Central Australia. Women collect the grubs by digging up the roots of the acacia bush and cracking them open to locate the grubs within. The grubs can be eaten raw or roasted.

For further information see

www.museum.wa.gov.au/collections/natscience/invertebrates/documents/Giantmoths.pdf

www.rumbalara-e.schools.nsw.edu.au/bushtucker/Xyleutes_sp.htm

- Watch the videoclip, *Witchetty grubs are healthy*. See www.australianscreen.com.au/titles/cool-drink-and-culture/clip2
- Find images of witjuti grubs and observe carefully the body structure, including the different sections of the grub. Use modelling clay or plasticine to make a model of a witjuti grub. Make a home for the grub using natural materials – inside a piece of root or bark, or on a leaf.



Work sample of a plasticine witjuti grub

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Lesson 4 Ant antics

Various kinds of ants are used by Indigenous people either as bush tucker or bush medicine.

The honeypot ant (*Melophoris inflatus*) is found in Central Australia and stores honey in its stomach. Indigenous women use digging sticks to dig the ant from deep within the ground. The swollen honey-filled stomach of the ant is regarded as a delicacy.

- Watch the videoclip, *Honey Ant*. See www.australianscreen.com.au/titles/living-country/clip3
- Find images of a honeypot ant and create an annotated drawing using Indigenous symbols. See www.aboriginalartstore.com.au/aboriginal-art-culture/aboriginal-symbols-glossary

Green tree ants (*Oecophylla smaragdina*) are found throughout northern Australia and are used as a bush medicine.

- Discuss how Indigenous people use green ants for medicinal purposes.

Explain

Lesson 5 Same or different?

- Contact the local Indigenous Land Council or cultural heritage centre to make contact with local Indigenous community members. Invite them to visit the class and talk about insects and their uses in the community. Include local Indigenous language for insects as well as English common names on the word wall.

Elaborate

Lesson 6 Habitat detectives

- Ask a local Indigenous community member and/or Indigenous education officer with local knowledge to take students for a bush tucker walk. Observe insects and small animals that could be used as a food source for Indigenous people.

Evaluate

Lesson 7 Hidden in their habitat

- Revisit the pictures of the insects from the *Engage* phase and ask students to regroup them using their knowledge about how these small animals are used in the Indigenous culture.