

For Creative Minds

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Organ Pipe Mud Dauber Wasp Nests



organ pipe mud dauber wasp cells

Many wasps and bees build nests in which they raise their young. Some make their nests out of wax, some out of paper they make, and some use mud to build their nest. Organ pipe mud dauber wasps collect mud and build mud cells to hold their eggs. Several mud cells side-by-side look like the pipes of an organ, which is how this insect got its name.

You might be surprised if you could see inside an organ pipe mud dauber cell! Each cell contains one wasp egg as well as food for the young wasp when it hatches from the egg.

Young organ pipe mud dauber wasps like to eat spiders. The adult female wasp locates and then stings several spiders. The spiders are alive but can't move after being stung. The wasp carries them back to her newest cell and stuffs them into it. Then she lays an egg on top of the spiders and seals up the cell with mud. When the wasp egg hatches, the young wasp will eat the spiders. Because the spiders are still alive, they don't rot. When the wasp is all grown up, it chews its way out of the mud cell and flies away.



wasp delivering ball of mud and building cell



wasp returning with spider and putting it in cell



wasp cell stuffed with spiders and one wasp egg

Match The Animal With Its Scat

Different animals produce scat with different shapes and sizes. Once you identify whose scat you found, you can find out more about what that animal eats by looking at what is in its scat. Among other things, you might find feathers, seeds, bones, grass, hair, and insects. Can you match the picture of the animal and what it eats with its scat?



black bear -
apple



coyote -
white-tailed deer



beaver -
tree bark



raccoon -
wild strawberries



river otter -
fish



Answers: black bear-5; coyote-4; beaver-1; raccoon-2; river otter-3

Galls

Galls are abnormal growths that form on plants. Sometimes a plant reacts to an insect laying an egg on or in it and grows a bump around it. These bumps, or galls, come in different sizes and colors and shapes, depending on the type of insect that lays the egg and the type of plant it lays it on. Each insect has a specific host plant and a specific looking gall. There can be one or several insects living inside a gall. The gall serves as a shelter and sometimes as a source of food for the insects while they are growing.

Here is a close look at some galls and the insects that live inside them.

Now that you know what to look for, see if you can find galls when you are outside.

blackberry
knot gall with
wasp larvae



coxcomb
elm gall with
aphids



pignut hickory
gall with
aphids

red pouch gall
(on staghorn
sumac) with
aphids



goldenrod
spindle gall
with moth
larvae