



Ant Biodiversity, Natural History, and Collective Behavior

July 26–August 1, 2026

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Ants are extraordinary insects, engineers, acrobats, symbionts, and superorganisms. They are among the most abundant animals, numerous in both rural and urban habitats throughout New England, and their biodiversity is important for ecosystem functioning. In this summer field seminar, we will gather for an in-depth and transdisciplinary study of our local ants and their complex behaviors and societies both in the field and in lab settings. Participants will be trained to find and collect ants using a range of methods (hand-collecting using aspirators, traps, baits, and UV-blacklighting), identify specimens to species using microscopy and morphological keys, to image them using macrophotography, culturing colonies within formicaria and artificial enclosures, to listen to them with sensors, and to track their movements and behaviors. Our days will combine research presentations with fieldwork and hands-on skills development. Participants will be encouraged to create shareable content including collections, videos, and zines using imaging methods, scientific illustration, and other artistic media with the goal of increasing appreciation, awareness, understanding, and love for the too-often unloved “little things that run the world” right beneath our feet

Jane S. Waters (jwaters2@providence.edu) is a myrmecologist and a professor in the Department of Biology at Providence College. She has a background in math, trained as a comparative physiologist, and has published widely on the metabolic scaling, collective behavior, and natural history of ants. Her lab group ([@antlabpvd](https://twitter.com/antlabpvd)) is working to decolonize myrmecology by integrating art with science, challenging problematic language, and creating new and inclusive spaces for collaboration and discovery.