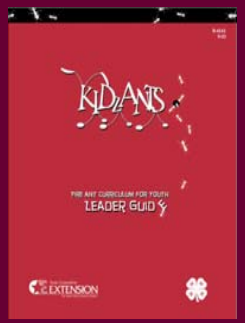
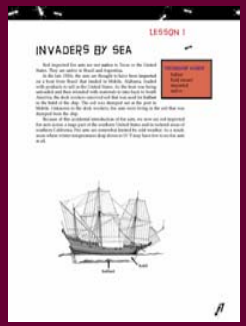


Leader Lesson Guide

Several Lessons

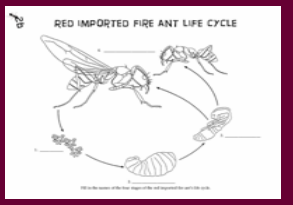


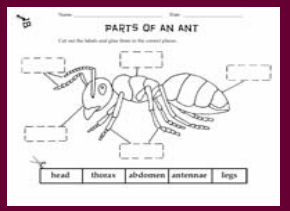
Various Topics

Learning with

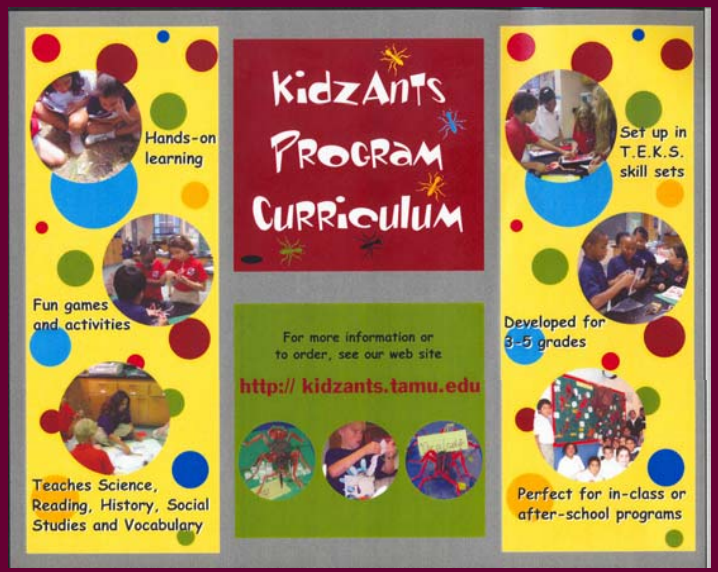
Activities

Activity Pages



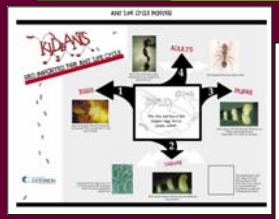


Group Participation



Testing

Posters and Games



The Red Imported Fire Ant

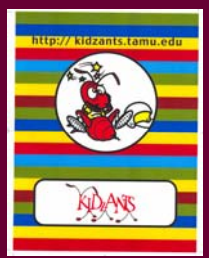
Why Develop KIDzANTS

According to a 1998 study conducted by Dr. Curtis Lard et.al. from the Department of Agricultural Economics, TX A&M University, of red imported fire ant (Solenopsis invicta) related costs in Dallas, Fort Worth, Austin, San Antonio, and Houston, red imported fire ants have serious economic effects for these metro areas of Texas. Households experienced the largest costs among sectors examined with a average of $151 per households spent annually which included repairs to property and equipment, first-aid, pesticides, baits, and professional services. A full damage assessment for Texas must include additional sectors, and the estimated costs of $581 million per year for the selected sectors underscore the impact of this pest. Treatment costs accounted for over 50% of this total cost. In Houston the average medical treatment costs per household of $25.46. The duration of injury for children and adults was 6.6 days and 5.6 days, respectively. Education of the general public about health and safety issues concerning fire ants is important. Understanding fire ant biology is essential before the public can understand the specifics of how baiting products work, and the concepts that make up the baiting program that the Texas Cooperative Extension recommends for the control of the fire ant. Innovative methods for the presentation of concepts are always needed so teachers/volunteers can accurately present information on fire ants in a method that is both appealing to the respective audience and satisfying to the teacher/volunteer. Focusing on elementary children can be an excellent avenue for getting a message concerning fire ants and fire ant safety home to parents. The KIDzANTS curriculum with educational CD and website (http://kidzants.tamu.edu) was developed, containing six 'learning experiences' to educate young children about the fire ant. This curriculum includes 6 lessons covering the introduction of the fire ant to the United States, morphology, life cycle (queen, workers, brood, and mating flight), mound development (single vs multiple queen and structure), identification versus other ant species, impact on wildlife, health and safety issues, and the diet of the fire ant. Activities requiring total class involvement have been included. Students in 3rd, 4th and 5th grade science classes are targeted.

KIDzANTS®

A New Curriculum About Fire Ants for Kids

Texas Cooperative EXTENSION
The Texas A&M University System



Educator Comments

"My students loved the curriculum and were disappointed when the unit was over. The posters included in the kit are terrific. The students were constantly looking at them in their spare time. They are excited every day when they come to my class. They stop me in the hall wanting to know what the lesson is going to be about today. I am amazed at what my students have learned, especially about the life cycle of an ant. I personally found the listing of the TEKS for each activity very helpful.

"The students and I loved the life cycle game. (The game with the spinner.) They did not want to stop and go to their next class. The posters in the program are also terrific. The students are always going up to them, looking at them and discussing them with others around them.

"I did create comprehension questions for two of the readings from the student's work book. (Very basic questions from "Mound, Sweet Mound" and "Bed and Breakfast".) That way I was helping out our reading teacher with basic skills and getting some other concrete grades. I am about to give the students the post test. I think that they will do well on the test. I will let you know the results.

Thank you for letting me talk with you and share the excitement that my students have had using the wonderful curriculum that you and your colleagues created." *(Lee Ann Wiseman – Southside Elementary, Angleton, TX)*

"I really enjoyed the program. The best thing is that it is totally self-contained. This allows it to fit in anywhere or anytime. I continued to use 4th grade because it ties in very well to adaptations in animals, life cycles, and food webs, which I build on extensively in 4th grade. The chart and picture poster are great – big enough to reference and teach from. I love the Social Studies tie-ins, especially with the maps. In two of my classes, we were able to go to the internet for class and look up a lot of the information. The kids enjoyed the technology interface. One class worked alone, and in the other, I assigned partners. The hands-on activities were even better, which helped to make the content more meaningful. From the beginning, I have liked how you spotlight the vocabulary, so very important for our bilingual population who continue to have problems with the Science TAKS across the state. *(Laura Allen – McGregor Elementary, Houston, TX)*

"This program is wonderful! I conducted it in the spring and we were able to actually go out into the yard and actually see what the curriculum was pointing out. The children loved the program and were enthusiastic the entire curriculum! They loved the game and two students even did ants as their science fair projects. One student goes to Mexico in the summer to live on a farm and was going to tell his grandfather about what he learned. *(Diana Morgan – Stephenson Elementary, Houston, TX)*