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A Butterfly and an Ant

One of my favorite things to do is to study about animals, their amazing design, and the things they do. Sometimes I run across animals with strange ways of living. The Large Blue butterfly (*Maculinea arion*) is one of those unusual animals.

Like other butterflies, the Large Blue butterfly begins its life as a caterpillar. It is the Large Blue's life as a caterpillar that is different from other butterflies. The adult Large Blue butterfly lays its eggs on the leaves of a plant called wild thyme. After a short period of time these eggs hatch into caterpillars. These young caterpillars begin to eat the wild thyme. After three weeks of feeding on the wild thyme, they, unlike most other caterpillars, fall to the ground.

Once on the ground the caterpillar just lays there, waiting for a red ant to come by and find him. When an ant finds the caterpillar, the ant rubs the caterpillar with its antennae to discover what he has found. This petting causes the caterpillar to give off chemical smells (pheromones) that fool the ants into



thinking that the caterpillar is one of them. The caterpillar also oozes a sweet sugary stuff that the ants like to eat. Liking what they have found, the ants carry the

caterpillar back to their nest.

Underground in the ants' nest, ant eggs hatch out into short, fat, wormlike grubs. These grubs later turn into ants. For ten months the Large Blue caterpillar lives in the ants nest, eating and gorging itself on ant grubs!

In late May or June the stuffed caterpillar changes and unfolds as a beautiful Large Blue butterfly which spreads its wings and flies away to begin the amazing process all over.

The Large Blue butterfly is a rare butterfly, and in 1979 was actually declared extinct in the country of England. Scientists were puzzled. The places the butterflies had been found still had red ants, and still had wild thyme. So why had the Large Blue butterflies died out?

What scientists discovered, after much observation of Large Blue butterflies still living in other countries, was that the caterpillars were very picky and choosy. Not just any red ant would do! The blue's caterpillars only use one kind of red ant (the *Myrmica sabuleti*). These special ants no longer lived where they had in England, therefore the Large Blue

butterflies could no longer live there either. Why had the ants died out? *Myrmica sabuleti* build their nests in short grass on south-facing hills that the Sun's rays could bake

and warm. If the grass is too long the ants freeze to death. Rabbits and cows had once eaten the grass and kept it short, but disease had killed most of the rabbits and there were fewer cows. So the grass grew longer, and these special ants died. Other red ants, that could stand the cold, moved in, but they were the wrong kind for the Large Blues; so the Large Blue butterfly also died out in these places.

When we study the Large Blue caterpillar we see it had to have been created with intelligent design. How could it ever have happened by chance and accident, as evolution would teach? Think: if by accident the caterpillar fell off of the leaf to the ground and just laid there without his special smells, the red ants would find him and eat him for lunch! He wouldn't have a second chance or enough time to make special smells to fool the ant. And he certainly couldn't warn his friends about the danger, because he'd be dead. The only way he could do all that he does with the ant is to have those special smells and sugary stuff working before he meets the ant. Did he sit around for thousands of years and dream up a way to fool the ant? Of course not! Why didn't the ant quickly evolve so he wouldn't freeze to death? Why didn't the caterpillar evolve different smells real fast to smell like other ants? Because evolution does not work! They had to have been designed and that design demands a designer. Creator.... God!



WORD SEARCH

Look for the words hidden in the puzzle below from words in the word list. The hidden words might be up and down, sideways, or slanted (not backwards). All words are from "A Butterfly and an Ant."



WORD LIST

DESIGN, BUTTERFLY, CATERPILLAR, EGGS, THYME, PLANT, HATCH, ANTS, SMELLS, PHEROMONES, OOZE, GRUBS, WINGS, BLUE, LARGE, SCIENTISTS, OBSERVATION, GRASS, RABBITS, COWS, INTELLIGENT, CHANCE, ACCIDENT, CREATOR, GOD, EVOLUTION, FREEZE

ASK EUGENE



Hi Eugene, I am a parent and just finished reading your letters and answers in the May/June 2001 newsletter. I just had to write and mention a few things about the "supercontinent/continental drift" theory. In textbooks you often see a supercontinent they call Pangea. A few things they don't tell you are: 1.) They had to shrink Africa 40% 2.) Mexico and all of Central America is gone 3.) Europe and South America have been rotated counterclockwise and Africa has been rotated clockwise 4.) If you take all the water out of the oceans there is dirt underneath. The earth has a solid crust - the continents are connected. Although there is no way to know for sure, the oceans haven't always been so deep. Most likely in the days of Peleg you could have

walked across the continental shelf until the ice from the ice age melted and the oceans deepened. If you lower the oceans just a few hundred feet, everything is connected with just a little water to hop across. Just something to think about. Lisa (Cookie) Johnson (Silverthorne, CO)

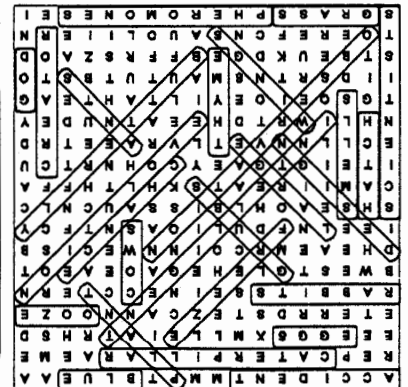
Dear Lisa: Thanks for your letter and comments. I really like your name by the way. Johnson just happens to be my favorite last name, and "Cookie" is one of my favorite food groups!!!! Love Ya...Eugene

Dear Eugene, Thank you for your letter! I have ANOTHER question for you. If the theory that there was a vapor canopy before the flood is true, is there more water on the earth now than there was before the flood? Since the vapor canopy isn't there anymore, do you think it rained to earth causing more water to be on the earth than there was? If there was less water before the canopy disappeared, does that make more of a possibility that there was only 1 land mass? In other words the water would be lower, revealing more land...and when the water is higher it covers up land so that the land is no longer connected making more than 1 land mass. I learned about the continental drift too and that is probably another way everything got separated, but do you think this is true too? Love, Ariane Giles (12)

Dear Ariane: Hello again! Once again some very good ideas. At the start of the flood, "the fountains of the deep" broke open. The majority of the water came from within the earth, not just from rain. We have to remember that the world was different after the flood. In Psalms 104 God tells us that at the end of the flood He raised up the mountains and the water poured off into new ocean basins. Because God does not describe how the world looked before the flood, we can only guess what it was actually like.

Love Ya...Eugene

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