

## Cloze Passage: Ant-aphid Symbiosis

*An activity of "Tee & Boba".*

In this issue's "Tee & Boba" (page 28, *What's Up* October 2023), Tee and Boba joined a queue of ants for aphids. Why do ants like aphids so much? Complete the cloze passage to find out! Fill in the 12 blanks with the given words below. Do not repeat the use of any given word.

saccharine	exchange	content	secrete
feed	cajoling	shrewdly	fend
solely	climates	fortunate	succulent

Aphids are small insects which **(a)** \_\_\_\_\_ on plant sap. Farmers and gardeners do not welcome them, but another type of "farmer" does — ants! As aphids eat, they **(b)** \_\_\_\_\_ a sugary liquid called "honeydew". Ants can't get enough of this **(c)** \_\_\_\_\_ treat.

If a colony of ants is **(d)** \_\_\_\_\_ to live near aphids, they do their best to take care of them. The ants would **(e)** \_\_\_\_\_ off creatures which prey on aphids, such as ladybugs. In cold **(f)** \_\_\_\_\_, ants would carry the aphids into their nests at night or during winter to keep them safe and warm. The ants even guide aphids to the most **(g)** \_\_\_\_\_ parts of a plant to feast to their hearts' **(h)** \_\_\_\_\_.

In **(i)** \_\_\_\_\_ for this service, the aphids let the ants "milk" them — the ants would stroke them with their antennae, **(j)** \_\_\_\_\_ them to release honeydew. This kind of "farming" is so important to the ant colony that some worker ants are **(k)** \_\_\_\_\_ tasked with caring for the aphids. When the ant colony moves, they would **(l)** \_\_\_\_\_ bring an aphid egg along to set up an aphid "farm" at their new nest.

Ants as farmers — imagine that!