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MailOnline

Tasting the rainbow: The ants whose multi-coloured abdomens show exactly what they've been eating

By [Daily Mail Reporter](#)

UPDATED: 10:00 EST, 5 August 2011

The saying 'you are what you eat' is true for these insects as stunning pictures show their abdomens changing colour as they sip on sugar drops.

Father of three Mohamed Babu set up the photographs after his wife, Shameem, showed him some ants had turned white after drinking spilt milk.

He gave the creatures the brightly coloured sugar drops and watched as their transparent stomachs matched the food they were eating.



© Mohamed Babu/ Solent News

A good palette: Some of the ants even wandered from one colour to another,

creating new combinations in their stomachs

Some of the ants even wandered from one colour to another, creating new combinations in their bodies.

Scientist Dr Babu, mixed the sugar drops with edible colours red, green, blue and yellow and placed them in his garden to attract the insects.

By placing them on a paraffin base the drops kept their shape when touched by the ants.

The 53-year-old discovered the ants preferred lighter colours such as yellow and green.

He said: 'The idea for the photograph came to me after my wife showed me some ants that turned white sipping the spilled milk drops on our kitchen counter.'

'I shot the photo in my garden to take advantage of the natural lighting and set a paraffin sheet with coloured sugar drops near some ants.'

'Even though I could get enough of a crowd within a few minutes, it required several retakes to have a shot up to my satisfaction.'



Ring of colour: An ant's transparent abdomen shows the colour of the food they have eaten

Dr Babu, from Mysore, in South India said: 'As the ant's abdomen is semi-transparent, the ants gain the colours as they sip the liquid.'

'The secret is the paraffin base, which prevents the drops collapsing when the ants touch them.'

'I really toiled to get a photo. The crowd always used to become unmanageable within a few minutes and

while I managed my camera with my right hand, my left hand was busy removing the extra ants.

'Once I lost the chance, I could only repeat it the next day.' he explained.

'Curiously, the ants preferred light colours, yellow and green.

'The darker green and blue drops had no takers, till there was no space around the preferred yellow and green drops.

'So I put larger drops of yellow and green, and smaller red and blue, to get maximum saturation around all the colours.'



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Eating their greens: The ants seemed to prefer lighter colours such as greens and yellow to darker blues

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