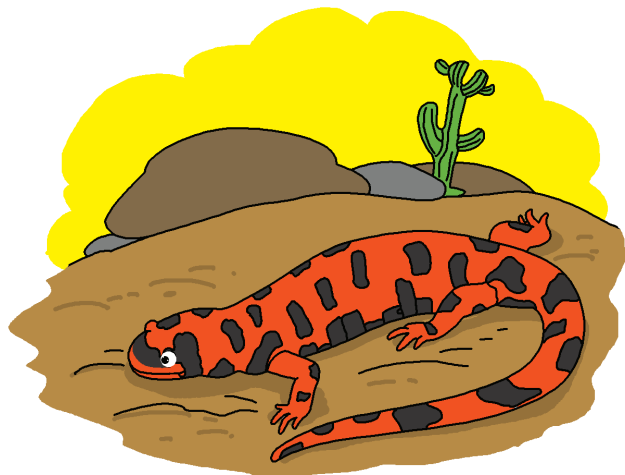




Marvellous Aunt Maneka

Aunt Maneka is an environmentalist, a Minister of State, and an animal lover. She is here to answer all your questions on animals and birds so that you can take better care of the animals around you and be a better friend of nature.



Q. What are Gila monsters?

Anuj Mukherjee, 11 years, Pune

Dear Anuj,

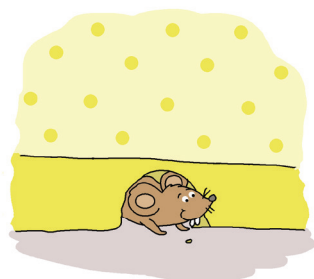
A. Gila monsters are a species of venomous lizard native to the United States and Mexico. They are heavy and slow-moving lizards that can grow up to 2 feet in length. Though the Gila monsters are venomous, owing to their sluggish nature, they pose little threat to humans. Their bite is painful but it is not fatal.

Q. There are rats in my house. How can I get rid of them without killing or harming them?

Harneet Singh, 10 years, Chandigarh

Dear Harneet,

A. You can use peppermint oil to get rid of rats. It is an environmentally friendly way to stop them from entering your home.



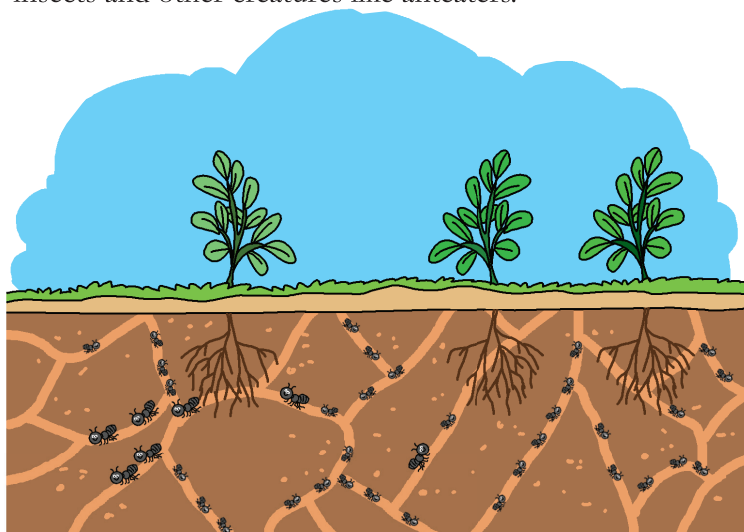
Place cotton wool soaked in this oil near the entrances, drain pipes and waste bins.

Q. What role do ants play in the ecosystem?

Ujjwal Nagle, 12 years, Kandivali

Dear Ujjwal,

A. Ants play an important role in the environment. Ants that live underground turn and aerate the soil, allowing water and oxygen to reach plant roots. Cleaning up dead organisms, they act like scavengers. Ants are also important food sources for some lizards, insects and other creatures like anteaters.



If you have questions about pets/animals/birds, write to us and we'll ask Aunt Maneka to answer.

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