

Nat Theo Club

FIELD NOTES

ISSUE #68



Plant Gall

PROCESS

FUN FACT

Many different types of insects create galls including:

- Gall wasps
- Gall midges
- Sawflies
- Aphids
- Mites

A gall is like a custom treehouse ordered by an insect and created by a plant. In most cases, galls do not harm plants.



HAVE YOU EVER SEEN AN INSECT NEST?

The pictures on the bottom left might look like berries on a bush, but they are actually insect nests!

Some insects including types of flies and wasps create nests on plants. These nests look like growths and are called "galls." How these galls are made is fascinating. A mother insect lays her eggs on the plant. She carefully chooses a place on the plant that is actively growing, like where a new stem or leaf is growing. After she lays her eggs, she lets out a special enzyme, which is a type of protein.



The enzyme speeds up the plant's growing process. The plant creates new cells and tissue to cover the eggs. The insect's babies (larvae) hatch out of the eggs inside this new protective nest. When ready, they chew their way out into the vast and wonderful world outside.

Many insects make different types of galls. Maybe you have found a leaf with bumps beneath it; those are galls! Some insect babies wait a year or two to chew their way out of the galls. The photos on the bottom left are of newly made galls I found last week on sagebrush. The image above is of an older hard gall I found on a rose bush.

Psalm 46:1 says, "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble." A plant gall acts as a refuge, or safe protected area, for insect larvae to grow up in until they are ready to go off on their own. In a similar way, God is our safe refuge. He protects us. And unlike an insect that eventually grows and moves out of its gall, we always remain in God's safety.

Hebrews 13:5 says "...I will never leave you; I will never abandon you." God's very presence is our safe place, and His presence is always with us! Whenever you are afraid or worried, you can go to God in prayer. He is a safe resting place.

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