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Minibeasts have been big business in primary schools since at least the mid-seventies and now, enshrined in the National Curriculum, they have become part of the law as well as the lore of the land. This series from Franklin Watts recognises that little creatures are no more disposable than bigger ones and sets out to show us how to look after them while they are under observation.

It succeeds, due mainly to excellent photographs by the author which do much to explain the somewhat slight texts and provide instruction that these leave out. We learn how to make a simple formicarium, how to collect ants to put in it, how to feed them so they will - if they include a Queen - multiply and allow a study of insect sociology. Ladybirds are even easier to entertain - in a net cage with all the aphid-infested vegetation you can find they multiply happily, the larvae chomping up to fifty greenfly a day - or each other if you don't feed them.

Each book provides a useful and responsible basis for exploration and will gain immensely from being shared - with peer or pedagogue - before the insects are released again into their natural habitats (full directions with every volume).

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