SimAnt

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SimAnt is a 1991 computer game by Maxis. It was designed by Will Wright, maker of other 'Sim' products such as *SimCity* and *The Sims*.

Contents

Description

The game is essentially a simulation of an ant colony. The game consists of three modes: a Quick Game, a Full Game, and an Experimental Game. It was released for the IBM PC, Commodore Amiga, Apple Macintosh, and Super Nintendo Entertainment System. The later version also added eight scenarios, where the goal in each is to eliminate the enemy red ants in various locales, each with different hazards. However, this version of the game lacks the Experimental Game.

SimAnt	
Developer(s)	Maxis Software, Imagineer Co., Ltd. (SNES)
Publisher(s)	Maxis Software
Release date(s)	1991 (DOS, Windows 3.x) 1992 (Amiga) 1993 (SNES)
Genre	Simulation
Mode(s)	Single
Platform(s)	Amiga, DOS, SNES, Windows 3.x

SimAnt Screenshot

In the game, the player plays the role of an ant in a colony of black ants in the garden of a suburban home. The player can change which ant they are (known as the "yellow ant", as it's colored at any time), and the ant controlled by them can order the other ants (by ordering a certain number to follow it, for instance). The player must battle against the red ants. The ultimate aim of the game is to spread throughout the garden, into the house, and finally to drive the human beings out of the house. In this respect, it differed from other 'Sim' games, which largely had no "win" or "lose" situation.

In the Quick Game, the player establishes a black ant colony in a small patch of yard, shown in top-down perspective. While the player establishes the black ant colony, the computer establishes a competing red ant colony in the same patch. Underground ant colonies are depicted in a side view. The player has direct control of a single ant at a time, indicated by a yellow color, and may switch control to a different ant at any time. The player's yellow ant may influence the behavior of other black ants by leaving pheromone trails to destinations such as food and enemy ant colonies. The quick game is won or lost when either the red or black colony in said patch is defeated.

The player's yellow ant may pick up food and rocks, regurgitate food for friendly ants, and attack enemy ants, spiders, caterpillars, and antlions. Natural hazards include human footsteps, spiders, antlions, lawnmowers,

and rain, which washes away pheromone trails and can flood the bottom of ant nests.

In the Full Game, the player begins with an ant colony in an overhead view, much like the Quick Game. The region of this overhead view is a single square of a map containing a yard and house, and the player wins by colonizing the entire map. The player spreads to other areas by producing young queens and drones to mate with each other. The full game is won or lost when all colonies in the yard are of one color.

The Experimental Game is similar to the Quick Game, except the player can also control red ants and has access to a set of experimental tools. These tools allow the player to place pheremone trails, rocks, ants, and food.

The boxed game also comes with a thoroughly researched instruction manual, which not only covers game mechanics, but also contains a large amount of information regarding ants and ant societies.

Creatures

Black ants, red ants, spiders, pill bugs, caterpillars and antlions are all the creatures in the game however, there is a human, his dog and an occasional cat for comic reasons on the yard/house map.

- **Spiders** appear only one at a time and eat any ant on sight. Spiders can only eat one ant at a time and are faster than any other creature including the player's ant. Spiders can be killed and become food if enough ants surround it. When the ant population gets high enough, the spider starts shooting red lasers from its eyes to kill ants.

- **Antlions** live in small pits and eat any ant that falls in their traps. An antlion can be killed if enough ants surround it.

- **Caterpillars** appear only one at a time, move in a straight path, and can only be stopped if an ant crosses its path. Caterpillers can also be killed for food if enough ants surround them.

- **Pillbugs** just move around the area doing nothing useful and cannot be killed due to their armor.

The player can also switch into the role of the spider. As a spider for example, you may move around and kill opposing ant colony members. This adds an interesting twist to the game.

The ants' caste system in the game is simple. Workers normally make up most of the colony and their jobs are to find food and bring it back, dig up the nest, and to care for eggs, larva, and the queen. They also help defend the nest. Soldiers are stronger than workers at fighting other ants and can do most of the same jobs as workers but need more food and can't care for eggs and larva. The queen ant only has to lay eggs and is the most important ant. New queens and males have wings and their only job is to mate and make new colonies.

Legacy

This game never achieved much popularity (except on a small-scale cult level, as in cult films), although it was re-released by Maxis as part of the SimClassics suite. However, it is considered by many of its players to have been one of the most unique of Will Wright's games.

Also, Will Wright's later game *The Sims* was heavily influenced by *SimAnt*. In the latter game, the artificial intelligence of the ants was based on the objects in their environment. On a more complicated level, people in *The Sims* act much the same way.

See also

- *Empire of the Ants*

- Ant farm

External link

- *SimAnt* (http://www.mobygames.com/game/simant-the-electronic-ant-colony/) at MobyGames

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The *Sim* Universe and Maxis

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The Sims

The Sims | The Sims 2 | The Sims Online

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