

Why Nina Ate An Ant

Dedicated local hero takes a big bite to protect TLC's Wildwood

by Wendy Innes
Member Care Coordinator

Nina Rastogi would do almost anything to see Wildwood protected forever. From initiating TLC's purchase of the Eco-forestry site in Ladysmith, to organizing a benefit concert for the site, Nina has been working tirelessly to save the place she loves. And this fall she was challenged to a fundraising idea she could really sink her teeth into.

It all started when Site Manager Jay Rastogi showed a group of visitors Wildwood's massive western thatching anthill. Since Nina often joins Jay in giving tours she wasn't too surprised when he popped an ant into his mouth and ate it. While Jay claims they are tasty Nina wasn't keen on the idea at all. She had never eaten an ant, nor did she ever intend to. But suddenly, one of the participants turned to her and said,

"I'll eat one if you eat one!"

Although she didn't really want to, Nina found herself contemplating this friendly challenge. "Even if just for his sake as he seemed to both want to and yet was apprehensive." But luckily, her thoughts were interrupted when a friend cried out,

"No don't! You should wait until someone dares you, like for \$1000 for Wildwood!"

Nina's challenger was quick to respond and offer her those very terms if she ate an ant right then with him.

"So I thought, for \$1000 for Wildwood... here goes nothing!"

But before she could even pick one up her friend jumped in again and convinced her to wait for an even bigger dare, or for more people to join in and increase the stakes. This time her challenger agreed.

So Nina watched on as her challenger ate his ant wrapped in a little Minor's lettuce (a native plant). He reassured her that his terms were still good even though he had

already eaten his end of the bargain.

When a few months went by and no other dares were placed, Nina stepped up to claim the \$1000 for Wildwood. And so, accompanied by a few key witnesses, she rolled an ant in a little lettuce and chewed! What do ants taste like you might be wondering?

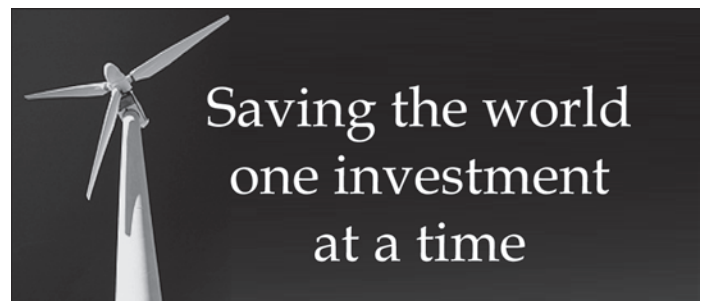
"It tasted like salad dressing," Nina reports. "Rather vinegary!"

Inspired by Nina's act of bravery to help protect Wildwood forever, Merve Wilkinson, Wildwood's 93 year old founder, has volunteered to be next to take on the challenge. How much will you pledge to see Merve eat an ant? Let's find out, shall we?

****To place your challenge today call us at 1-877-485-2422, and look for ant eating updates in future Landmark issues. ■**



Bon appetit! Nina Rastogi munches on an ant to win a \$1000 dare for Wildwood as Merve Wilkinson, Wildwood's founder, cheers her on. Will Merve be next to take on the challenge? *Photo by Jay Rastogi.*



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