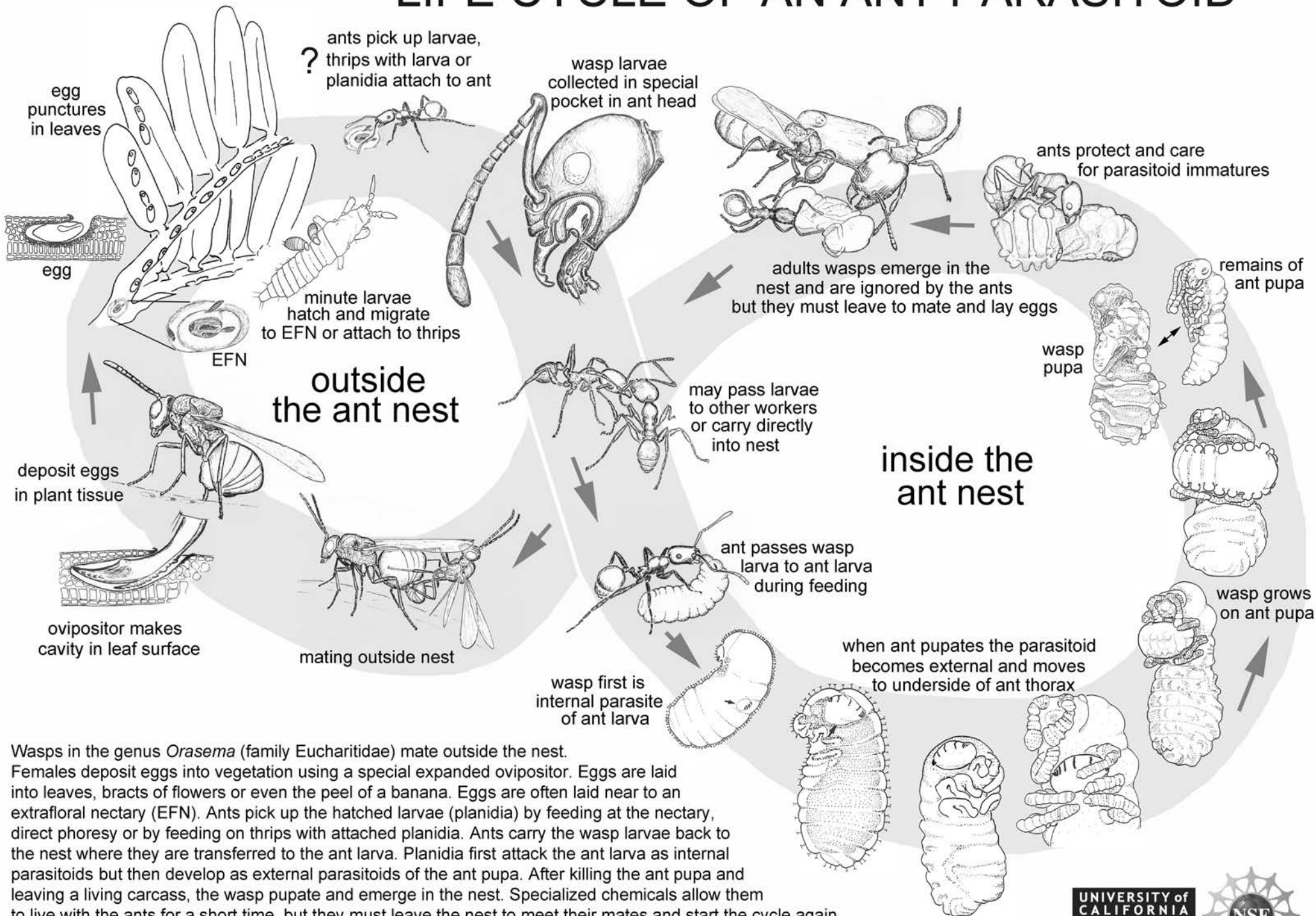


# LIFE CYCLE OF AN ANT PARASITOID



Wasps in the genus *Orasema* (family Eucharitidae) mate outside the nest. Females deposit eggs into vegetation using a special expanded ovipositor. Eggs are laid into leaves, bracts of flowers or even the peel of a banana. Eggs are often laid near to an extrafloral nectary (EFN). Ants pick up the hatched larvae (planidia) by feeding at the nectary, direct phoresy or by feeding on thrips with attached planidia. Ants carry the wasp larvae back to the nest where they are transferred to the ant larva. Planidia first attack the ant larva as internal parasitoids but then develop as external parasitoids of the ant pupa. After killing the ant pupa and leaving a living carcass, the wasp pupate and emerge in the nest. Specialized chemicals allow them to live with the ants for a short time, but they must leave the nest to meet their mates and start the cycle again.

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