

# Smart Stuff

with Twig Walkingstick



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY  
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EXTENSION  
OHIO AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH  
AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER

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**Notes:** The Kaibab squirrel is called the Kaibab squirrel because the only place it lives in the world is the Kaibab Plateau in northern Arizona (the north rim of the Grand Canyon and part of Kaibab National Forest). It's a subspecies of the Abert's squirrel, also called the tassel-eared squirrel. The two look a lot alike, but the Abert's has a whitish-gray, not grayish-black, belly, but there's also an all-black (melanistic) version of the Abert's. Joseph G. Hall is the name of the scientist. He wrote a study called "A Field Study of the Kaibab Squirrel in Grand Canyon National Park" in *Wildlife Monographs* in 1981.

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**Q. Dear Twig: I saw a squirrel use its tail as an umbrella.**

A. Excellent.

**Q. It was raining pretty hard. The squirrel was sitting there eating something. It was holding its tail up over its back.**

A. A scientist at the Grand Canyon saw that once. He was watching a Kaibab ("kie-bab") squirrel. A big storm hit. The squirrel hid next to a tree. "The squirrel **crouched quietly** on the leeward, partially protected side [the side away from where the rain was coming from], **with its tail over its back,**" the scientist wrote. "It showed no apparent reactions to the lightning flashes or loud claps of thunder but did occasionally shake itself."

**Q. Neat.**

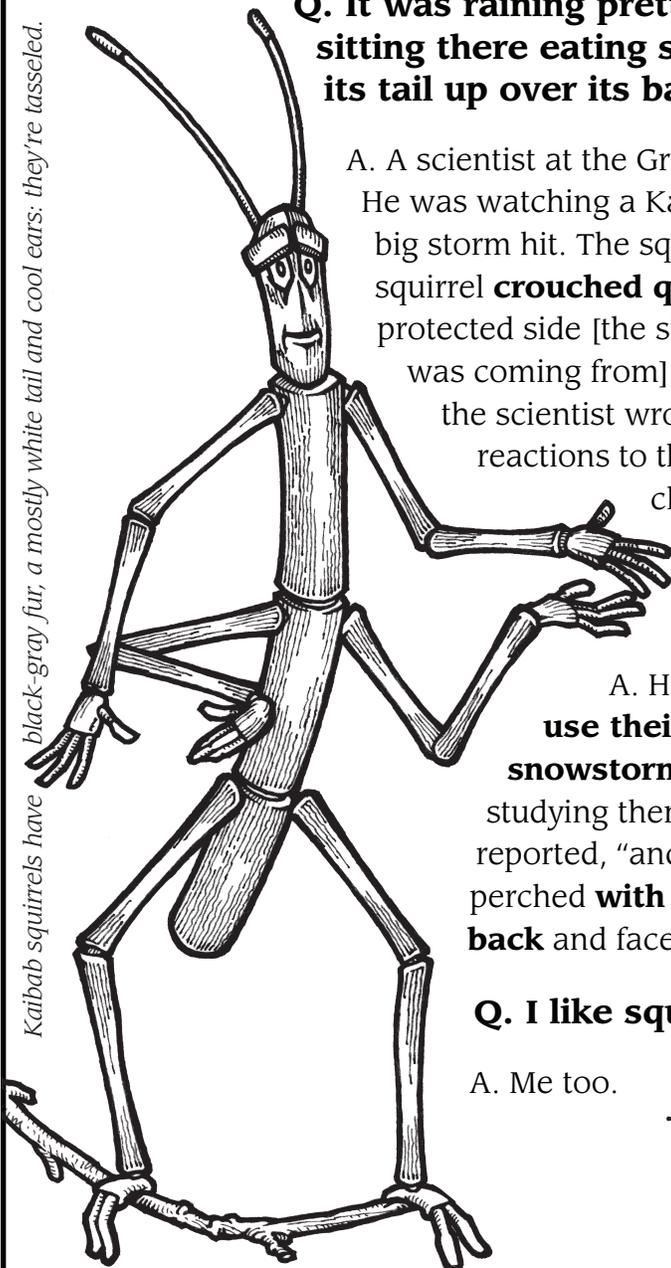
A. He also saw the squirrels there **use their tails for protection in a snowstorm.** (He spent a lot of time there studying them.) "It was rather windy," he reported, "and when feeding, the squirrels perched **with the tail arched over the back** and faced away from the wind."

**Q. I like squirrels.**

A. Me too.

Twig

Kaibab squirrels have black-gray fur, a mostly white tail and cool ears: they're tasseled.



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