

Smart Stuff

with Twig Walkingstick

Q. Dear Twig: The mammoth. The mastodon. The saber-toothed tiger. Where'd they live? Where'd they go?

A.: They lived in **North America** (and, in some cases, in other places, too) until the end of the **Ice Age**: about 10,000 years ago. Then they went **extinct**.

So did many other big **mammals**, like the **giant beaver, Shasta ground sloth, American lion** and **giant short-faced bear**.

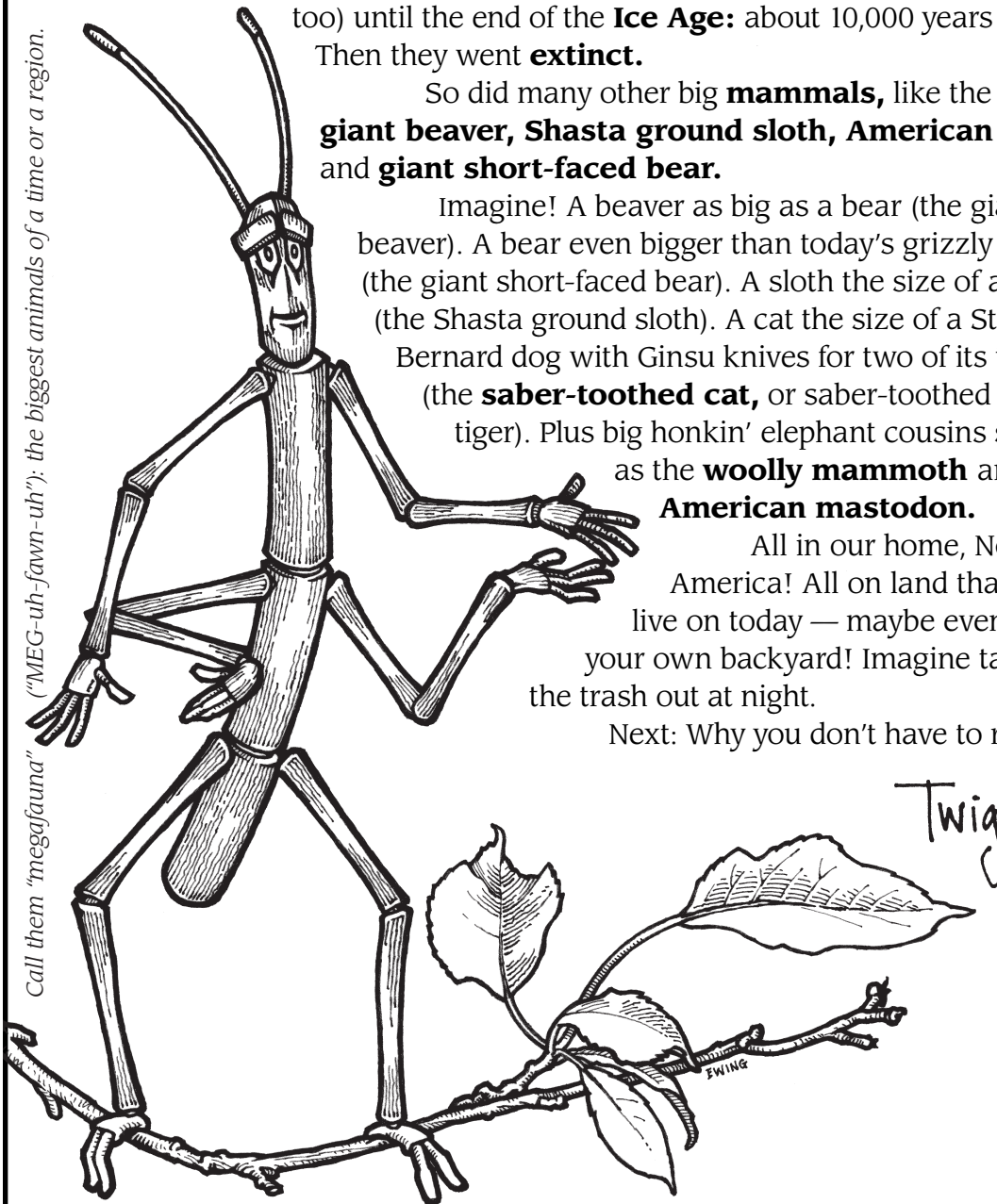
Imagine! A beaver as big as a bear (the giant beaver). A bear even bigger than today's grizzly bear (the giant short-faced bear). A sloth the size of a cow (the Shasta ground sloth). A cat the size of a St.

Bernard dog with Ginsu knives for two of its teeth (the **saber-toothed cat**, or saber-toothed tiger). Plus big honkin' elephant cousins such as the **woolly mammoth** and **American mastodon**.

All in our home, North America! All on land that you live on today — maybe even your own backyard! Imagine taking the trash out at night.

Next: Why you don't have to run!

Call them "megafauna" ("MEG-uh-fawn-uh"): the biggest animals of a time or a region.



From your scientific friends at The Ohio State University — specifically, the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center (www.oardc.ohio-state.edu) and OSU Extension (extension.osu.edu).

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Notes: Extinct North American megafauna, all of them too big to fit in a Prius or at least unlikely to try, include the stag moose, dire wolf, western horse, ancient bison, giant armadillo, scimitar cat, yesterday's camel, imperial mammoth and Jefferson's ground sloth. Sources included the American Museum of Natural History, <http://www.amnh.org/science/biodiversity/extinction/Intro/GiantBeasts.html>; *Ice Age Mammals of North America* by Ian Lange (2002, Mountain Press Publishing Company); *Twilight of the Mammoths* by Paul S. Martin (2005, University of California Press); *Mammal Evolution* by R.J.G. Savage and M.R. Long (1986, Facts on File); and the BBC's "Walking with Prehistoric Beasts."

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