

Ant Care Sheet



Species: *Lasius flavus*

Common name: Yellow Meadow Ant

Colony form: Monogyne (Single Queen) can be Polygyne (Multiple Queens)

Sizes -

Workers: 2-4 mm

Queen: 7-9 mm

Information:

Lasius flavus are known as '**Yellow Meadow Ants**' and are commonly found in Europe. *Lasius flavus* are golden yellow in colour and are smaller than the **Common Black** ant *Lasius niger*. *Lasius flavus* are a subterranean species which means that they generally live underground in excavated nests. They can be found building soil mounds on lawns and fields. The workers of the species *Lasius flavus* are yellow in colour but the Queens are very similar to *Lasius niger* Queens. The difference is that *Lasius flavus* Queens have slightly yellow legs and are very slightly smaller. *Lasius flavus* are a shy species and slow moving so are no threat to humans. They do not have a sting so are safe to be around. *Lasius flavus* are quite a low-maintenance species but can be difficult to establish as they are shy and do not forage as readily as other species. They are also a relatively slow growing species. *Lasius flavus* do well at room temperature but it doesn't harm them if you add slight additional heating to increase the brood development rate.

Mating flights are big in summertime and many Queens go and found successful colonies. *Lasius flavus* hibernate through the winter and wake from hibernation around late March. Hibernation can be achieved by reducing the temperature of the nest to around 8 degrees Celsius but not any lower than this.

Feeding:

Lasius flavus will accept some different types of food, the main source being insects. They also like sugary foods such as apple slices and honey water.

Regular protein for the development of the brood should also be given in the form of live/dead insects or meat such as cooked chicken. It is generally said that giving live food to small colonies of ants is not the wisest of moves as they will be unlikely to kill it. Mealworms are commonly given as a source of protein. You can buy live mealworms and when you want to feed the colony, you select a young mealworm with a soft outer shell and dip it into hot/boiling water to kill it. After this, you can place the mealworm for the ants to eat. Dipping the mealworm in boiling water ensures that it is fully dead and that any nasty microbes are killed. Along with mealworms, the following insects are suitable for a colony of *Lasius flavus*:: bluebottle flies, fruit flies, spiders, wasps, bees, moths, crickets, locusts, waxworm, beetles, other ant species and many more!

Formicarium Choices

When it comes to choosing a formicarium for *Lasius flavus* you need to take into account that they prefer to live in dark nests where they feel safe and secure. Vibrations of the nest should also be kept to a minimum as with all ant species.

- Ytong nests

Ytong nests are a type of aerated concrete block which can be carved manually or by machinery to produce interesting patterns. They are very efficient because you can control moisture content by filling water troughs to the desired level and the clear acrylic cover allows excellent viewing of the ants. They are available in many different sizes and have intriguing chamber designs. You can also have all-in-one Ytong nests which include a foraging area on the top of the nest. Ytong nests can be covered with a opaque material to mimic the dark living conditions of *Lasius flavus*.

Soil/Sand-loam nests

Soil nest set-ups are also used as a natural type of formicarium as it allows the ants to dig their own nests. Soil nests are available as slim-line versions which consist of two glass panels which are sealed and have a gap in between in which you can fill with soil or a sand-loam mix. Tanks are often used too as they provide a big space for ant colonies to grow and the space above the soil can be used as a foraging area. This is a good formicarium which has the ability to replicate outdoor environments well. *Lasius flavus* are almost always found in underground excavated nests so it would be perfect to allow them to excavate their own nest in soil/sand-loam.

Beginner notes:

- *Lasius flavus* are a shy species so will not forage far in the early stages so food should always be provided near the Queen/ants.
- Try not to disturb a young colony/Queen with vibrations such as tapping on the formicarium or excessive handling of the test tube that the colony resides in. This will stress the Queen out and she will cease to lay eggs for sometime or begin eating her own eggs which is not ideal.
- Soil/sand-loam nests are ideal for this species as it gives them the security and darkness they would receive in wild underground nests.