

Housing

Ants can be kept in test tube for a relatively long time. Ants can be moved into increasingly large formicaria as they grow. As a rule, a colony should be able to fill 30% of the nest. An outworld, used to simulate "the outside" is also useful for many species. Ants usually create a pile of dead colony members and food scraps in the outworld. This pile should be cleaned routinely.



Hibernation

In Canada, most ants need to spend part of the year in hibernation. As a general rule, the following is ideal for those genera:

Aphaenogaster- 3 months

Camponotus- 4 months

Crematogaster- 3-4 months

Formica- 3-4 months

Lasius- 4-5 months

Leptothorax- 3 months

Myrmica- 2-3 months

Tetramorium- 3 months

Solenopsis- 3 months

Ants should be hibernated at 5-10°C. This can be done either in a fridge, wine cooler, garage, or other small area. Many fridges are dry, and care must be taken to ensure the ants remain hydrated.



ANT KEEPING CARE GUIDE



Feeding

Ants require two things: protein and carbohydrates

Protein can be provided in the form of insects, meat or seeds for granivorous ants

Carbohydrates can be provided through a liquid sugar. Honey, sugar water, hummingbird nectar, and Sunburst are all wonderful sources. Ants should be fed weekly, for small colonies, and frequency should increase slowly

Contact us for information.



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THE BASICS OF
ANTKEEPING

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FOUNDING

In the beginning, there was a queen....

Queen ants can broadly be divided into 3 different types-- fully-claustral, semi-claustral, and parasitic.

The Nuptial Flight

Colonies release alates-- male and female reproductive ants every year. Mated queens can be found during or after these flights, upon which they can be founded.

Escape Prevention

Many people are afraid that their ants may escape. Escape prevention is usually a 1-2" layer on the top rim of your outworld. Usually made out of virgin olive oil, dried talc powder, or Fluon (Insect-a-slip). Barriers effectiveness will depend on the type of barrier and the species of ant.



1

Fully-Claustral

Fully claustral queens build a claustral chamber, and raise their first batch of workers called *nanitics* off of fat reserves and wing muscle. These queens can be left alone until their first workers hatch.

2

Semi-Claustral

Semi-claustral queens build a claustral chamber, but don't have the adequate fat reserves to found workers and must be fed adequately. Sometimes an outworld is needed for these species.

3

Parasitic

Some queens are incapable of founding colonies independently, and must be raised by offering them host workers, which will raise the parasitic brood to maturity. One way is to introduce callow (freshly hatched) workers. Another way is to use pupae or workers that have fully dried their exoskeletons. As a rule:

Lasius: Callow workers, or full workers

Formica Callow workers, pupae

Aphaenogaster: Anything

Heating & Humidity

Most ants will require a heat cable running underneath one side of the formicarium. They require a location where they can warm up. An 11.5 watt reptile heating cable works well. Ants prefer variation in heat and in humidity throughout the nest. Therefore, heating cables usually work better than heating mats or heating pads. Formicaria should be watered once a week or whenever the water supply starts running low.