

Ant Care Sheet



Species: *Camponotus ligniperdus* (also *Camponotus ligniperda*)

Common name: Carpenter Ant

Colony form: Monogyne (Single Queen)

Sizes -

Workers: 6-13 mm

Queen: 14-16mm

Information:

Camponotus ligniperdus are a strong, large ant species which are coloured black-brown with red colouration on the thorax. They are an aggressive species which can consume large amount of insects with ease. They tend to nest in dead wood and underground excavated nests in the wild. They can be found in several European countries such as France, Belgium and Switzerland. *Camponotus ligniperdus*, like most *Camponotus* species, are quite slow growing meaning that it takes a long time from egg to worker. Single Queens can take several months to found small colonies and therefore require a bit more patience. Once established, colonies can be very interesting to observe. They forage for large prey and make good use of their large mandibles. *Camponotus ligniperdus* will benefit from some extra heating to around 24°C by means of a heat mat/cable.

Camponotus ligniperdus 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:

Camponotus ligniperdus will accept lots of 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 *Camponotus ligniperdus*:: 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 *Camponotus ligniperdus* you need to take into account that they are a large species and will require a lot of room in comparison to smaller species. They can relatively quickly outgrow a small nest so it is recommended to have a nest which has large multiple chambers/ large nesting space. 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 customised to have large, deep chambers which is perfect as this is a big species.

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. *Camponotus ligniperdus* will do well in a soil/sand-loam nest provided they get the correct nutrition and space requirements.

Beginner notes:

- *Camponotus ligniperdus* are a large species so choose your formicarium wisely.
- 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.
- *Camponotus ligniperdus* colonies can be very slow to start off and establish, therefore it is recommended to purchase a colony with some workers if you want immediate entertainment.