Advanced

Tapinoma melanocephalum

Ghost ant

A tiny tropical tramp ant with a dark head and a pale, almost see-through body, and a known pest in heated buildings. Not sold by Best Ants UK, possibly illegal or impossible to import to the UK, and for experienced keepers only.

ORIGIN
Uncertain, tropical
Probably Africa or Asia; now worldwide

NEST TEMPERATURE
24–28°C all year
Best about 26°C; heater at 26°C

OUTWORLD TEMPERATURE
20°C night, up to 28°C day
By day like the nest or a degree or two cooler

HUMIDITY
Nest 50–70%
Outworld about 50%, never watered

WINTER
No hibernation
Tropical: keep warm all year, heater on

MOVE TO A NEST
50+ workers
A queen on her own too (tiny workers)

SIZE
Queen about 2.5 mm
Workers 1.3–2 mm, dark head, pale body

COLONY
Many queens
Several linked nests; up to a few thousand

Food

- **Proteins:** Protein Jelly (keep in the fridge) or Cricket Mash. Live food only for established colonies: scalded, cut in half
- **Carbohydrates:** organic Ant Honey or Ant Nectar, far better than sugar water or home-made mixes; tiny drops
- Twice a week, small amounts, outworld only; leftovers out after 2 days. A queen on her own: a tiny drop of protein jelly on tin foil once a week

Water

- Distilled or purified water only. Never tap, rain or bottled mineral water, even boiled (mould and fungus).
- Pipette a few drops through the watering hole; stop when 1–2 drops appear inside. About once a week, or when the meter drops below 50%.
- Never water the outworld; keep it at about 50% humidity. A watering test tube in the outworld gives a safe drink.

Best setup

- A7 Plus ant farm kit only (small nest, built-in digital meter); Nest + Outworld option if you already have your ants
- Advanced Heating System Small 4W under one quarter of the nest, opposite the watering area, set to 26°C, all year
- Daylight, never direct sunlight; away from windows, radiators, vibrations, speakers and kitchens
- Escape risk: extremely high. PTFE band on the top inner edge of the outworld lid (every 2–4 weeks), lid always closed, weekly checks, ideally an outer PTFE box

Good to know

- Tramp ant and known indoor pest: not sold by Best Ants UK, possibly illegal or impossible to import to the UK. We never encourage importing ants
- Many queens and budding mean a small escape can start an infestation. Never spray escapees: they split into new nests
- Never release it. Can't keep it? See our ant adoption page

Read the full care guide | **All our ant care sheets**

Best Ants UK care sheet. These notes cover the essentials only: read the full care guide and our ant farm setup guide from A to Z.