BEST ANTS UK | ANT CARE SHEET

Keeping ants since 1997

Beginner

Formica subsericea

Silky field ant

A fast, shiny black field ant from eastern North America and a close cousin of the UK silky ant. Hardy and forgiving, with a big appetite for protein.

ORIGIN

Eastern North America

Fields, lawns, roadsides, wood edges

NEST TEMPERATURE

22–28°C

Brood grows best at 24–26°C

OUTWORLD TEMPERATURE

18°C night, up to 28°C day

By day like the nest or a degree or two cooler

HUMIDITY

Nest 50–60%

Outworld about 50%, never watered

WINTER

Natural winter rest

Steady 5–10°C, Nov–Mar, only in a hibernation unit; or room temperature

MOVE TO A NEST

10+ workers

15–20 is better

SIZE

Queen 10–12 mm

Workers about 5–8 mm, black and silky

COLONY

Usually one queen

Several thousand workers when mature

Food

- **Proteins:** Protein Jelly (keep in the fridge) or Cricket Mash; extra when larvae appear
- **Carbohydrates:** organic Ant Honey or Ant Nectar, far better than sugar water or home-made mixes
- Twice a week, small amounts, outworld only; remove leftovers after 2 days. Live food only for established colonies: scalded, cut in half, never for small colonies.

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.

Best setup

- A7 Plus ant farm kit (built-in digital meter); A6 with Meter once the colony is big
- Advanced Heating System Small 4W under one quarter of the nest, opposite the watering area, set to 24°C
- Daylight, never direct sunlight; away from windows, radiators, vibrations, speakers and kitchens
- Escape risk: high. PTFE Fluon band on the top inner edge of the outworld lid, reapplied every 2–4 weeks

Good to know

- North American ant: not sold by Best Ants UK, and we don't encourage importing ants
- Very fast and shy; slow first year, then dozens by year two and hundreds after
- Never release: it is not a UK ant. 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.