BEST ANTS UK | ANT CARE SHEET

Keeping ants since 1997

Intermediate

Pheidole dentata

Eastern big-headed ant

A small big-headed ant from the south-eastern USA, with tiny minors and big-headed majors that rush out to fight fire ants. A North American ant, not sold by Best Ants UK and possibly illegal or impossible to import to the UK.

ORIGIN

South-eastern and central USA

Into northern Mexico; logs, stumps, open ground

NEST TEMPERATURE

24–28°C

Heater at 26°C under a quarter of the nest

OUTWORLD TEMPERATURE

18°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 full hibernation

Optional gentle rest 15–18°C; never below 15°C

MOVE TO A NEST

50+ workers

A queen on her own too (tiny workers)

SIZE

Queen 5.5–7 mm

Minors 3–4 mm, majors 3.5–5 mm

COLONY

Usually one queen

Thousands of workers when mature

Food

- **Proteins:** Protein Jelly (keep in the fridge) or Cricket Mash. Live food only for established colonies: scalded, cut in half, never smaller, no mealworms
- **Carbohydrates:** organic Ant Honey or Ant Nectar, far better than sugar water or home-made mixes; small drops
- **Seeds:** a few small seeds for the majors, on tin foil or a feeding dish, never on the substrate

- Twice a week, small amounts, outworld only; leftovers out after 2 days. Founding queen: 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
- Daylight, never direct sunlight; away from windows, radiators, vibrations, speakers and kitchens
- Escape risk: high, tiny fast workers. 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 possibly illegal or impossible to import to the UK. We never encourage importing ants
- Majors defend the nest against fire ants with a special alarm; no rest in a queen's first year
- 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.