Intermediate

Myrmecocystus placodops

Bicoloured honeypot ant

> One of the biggest honeypot ants in North America, with a bright red head and a glossy black gaster. Fast daytime foragers; a wild nest can hold 1,500 repletes.

ORIGIN
South-western USA and northern Mexico
Hot, open grassland and scrub

NEST TEMPERATURE
24–30°C
Best 26–28°C; heater set to 28°C

OUTWORLD TEMPERATURE
18°C night, up to 28°C day
By day like the nest or a degree or two cooler

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

WINTER
No rest in year one
From year two: Nov–end Feb at room temperature, heater off

MOVE TO A NEST
10+ workers
15–20 is better

SIZE
Queen about 13–15 mm
Workers about 5–10 mm, very varied

COLONY
One queen only
Hundreds in year one, 1,000+ later

Food

- **Proteins:** Protein Jelly (keep in the fridge) or Cricket Mash
- **Carbohydrates:** organic Ant Honey or Ant Nectar, far better than sugar water or home-made mixes, offered at every feed: sugars are vital for the repletes
- 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. A watering test tube in the outworld gives a safe drink.

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 28°C (a must in UK homes)
- 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, may be illegal or impossible to import to the UK, and we don't encourage importing ants
- Active by day; wild nests run more than 4 metres deep
- Brood takes about 7–9 weeks from egg to worker; no sting, but fast runners, so PTFE is a must. Never release: 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.