BEST ANTS UK | ANT CARE SHEET

Keeping ants since 1997

Advanced

Acromyrmex versicolor

Desert leafcutter ant

A rusty red, spiny leafcutter from the Sonoran and Mojave deserts that farms a fungus garden on leaves, flowers and petals. A North American ant, not sold by Best Ants UK and possibly illegal or impossible to import to the UK.

ORIGIN

South-western USA, NW Mexico

Desert washes, around large bushes and trees

FUNGUS CHAMBER

23–26°C

Never above about 27°C. Advanced Heating System 4W at 25°C under ¼ of the chamber

OUTWORLD TEMPERATURE

18°C night, up to 28°C day

By day like the fungus chamber or a degree or two cooler

HUMIDITY

Fungus chamber 80–90%

Outworld about 50%, waste area 30–40%

WINTER

No hibernation

Slows down; keep warm and humid

MOVING IN

Straight into the setup

After up to 5 hours unopened; colony with fungus only

SIZE

Queen about 10 mm

Workers 3–6 mm, rusty red, spiny

COLONY

One or several queens

A few thousand ants when mature

Food

- **Fungus food:** fresh bramble, rose, oak and clover leaves, flowers and dried rose petals; lightly misted, never soaked
- **Extras:** small pieces of apple, banana or grape; a tiny drop of Ant Honey or Ant Nectar now and then; oat flakes only in an emergency

- Remove old, dried leaves after 2 days. Pesticide-free only. No protein jelly or insects needed

Water

- Distilled or purified water only, never tap, rain or mineral water, even boiled.
- Pipette a few drops into the damp part of the fungus chamber, away from the fungus, whenever the meter drops below 80%; never drip on the fungus, never puddles. Check every day.
- Never water the outworld (about 50%); keep the waste area dry (30–40%).

Best setup

- No Best Ants UK ant farm for leafcutters: humid fungus chamber with a digital meter, foraging area, dry waste area emptied weekly
- Heating: Advanced Heating System Small 4W at 25°C under one quarter of the fungus chamber, on the side away from the water; never above about 27°C
- Arrives in a fungus container (sometimes the fungus separately): unopened up to 5 hours, then straight into the setup
- Escape risk: strong climbers. 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
- No sting, but a painful bite: never handle. Overheating kills the fungus
- 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.