BEST ANTS UK | ANT CARE SHEET

Keeping ants since 1997

Intermediate

Camponotus sericeus

Silk ant

A black carpenter ant with shining golden hairs that forages by day and leads nestmates to food in tandem runs. An African and Asian ant, not sold by Best Ants UK and possibly illegal or impossible to import to the UK.

ORIGIN

Africa, Arabia, tropical Asia

Savannah, dry woodland, orchards and gardens; nests in soil, often under stones

NEST TEMPERATURE

24–30°C all year

Advanced Heating System Small at about 26°C, under a quarter of the nest

OUTWORLD TEMPERATURE

21°C night, up to 28°C day

By day like the nest or a degree or two cooler

HUMIDITY

Nest 60–80%

Outworld about 50%, never watered

WINTER

No hibernation

Tropical: keep warm all year, growth still slows a little

MOVE TO A NEST

3+ workers

5+ is better

SIZE

Queen 11–13 mm

Workers 7–11 mm, black with golden hairs, broad-headed majors

COLONY

One queen

Usually a few hundred workers, up to a few thousand

Food

- **Proteins:** Cricket Mash (the more efficient protein for carpenter ants) or Protein Jelly (keep it in the fridge)
- **Carbohydrates:** organic Ant Honey or Ant Nectar, far better than sugar water or home-made mixes

- Twice a week, small amounts, outworld only, on tin foil or a feeding dish; leftovers out after 2 days. Founding queen: a tiny drop of protein jelly on tin foil once a week. Small colonies don't need live insects
- Buy food only from established ant-keeping suppliers: bird seed, dried mealworms and pet-shop live food often carry blood-sucking mites

Water

- Distilled or purified water only, never tap, rain or mineral water, even boiled
- Pipette a few drops at a time through the watering hole and stop when 1 or 2 drops appear inside; water when the meter drops below 60%
- Never open water: a watering test tube in the outworld, never a water dispenser; never water the outworld

Best setup

- Carpenter Ant Farm Starter Kit (nest with humidity and temperature meter) or A7 Plus with its pre-installed digital meter
- Daylight, never direct sunlight; away from windows, radiators, vibration, speakers and kitchens. Test tube warmth: a heating cable at the cotton stopper end only, never a heat mat
- Escape risk: fast runners and climbers. PTFE Fluon band around the top inner edge of the outworld lid, reapplied about every 4 weeks (every 2 weeks for 300+ ants)

Good to know

- Most carpenter queens eat their eggs in transit: normal for Camponotus, she lays again within 2–3 months
- Day-active and warmth-loving: a worker leads a nestmate to food in a tandem run
- On arrival: parcel unopened for 5 hours, then 4–5 days of complete rest. Never handle them, never a fridge, shed or garage

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.