Carebara affinis

Asian Marauder Ant | Care Sheet

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KEEPING LEVEL	ORIGIN	NEST TEMPERATURE	NEST HUMIDITY	WORKERS BEFORE NEST
🎓 Advanced	🌍 Southeast Asia	🌡️ 27–29°C	💧 90–100%	🏠 100+

🐜 At a glance

Origin	🌏 Tropical South and Southeast Asia
Keeping level	Advanced — fast-growing, hungry and fierce. No sting, but majors bite hard
Queen	Around 17mm
Workers	From 2mm minors to 11mm+ majors — extremely polymorphic
Setup	Natural setup only, such as our Natural Eco Ant Farm — we do not recommend a standard nest
Colony form	Single queen at founding; large colonies can hold several
Nest temperature	27–29°C (outworld 21–35°C)
Nest humidity	90–100% in the nesting substrate
Workers before moving into a nest	Start with at least 100 workers (majors are a bonus, not a must)
Winter	No hibernation — keep warm all year

📖 About this species

The lighter-coloured cousin of Carebara diversa, from tropical Southeast Asia, with the same care needs. Extremely polymorphic: minors of 2mm work alongside soldiers of 11mm. Feed protein-rich food three times a week, and remove leftovers before the next feed.

📦 When your ants arrive

- ⚠️ **MOST IMPORTANT:** leave the parcel completely unopened, exactly as it arrived, at room temperature for **5 hours**. The ants must adjust to your home's temperature gradually — abrupt temperature changes make ants seriously unwell.
- After the 5 hours, check the queen is safe and sound, then leave the colony in its original packaging (test tube still in its tin foil and wrapping) in a quiet spot — in daylight, never direct sunlight — away from vibration and daily household activity.
- 😴 Give the colony **4 to 5 days** of complete rest. The ants were fed before dispatch and need nothing from you during this time. Assemble and water the nest while you wait.
- Still workers or a motionless queen after delivery are almost always delivery stress. Check the antennae: moving antennae means she is fine. Almost all recover within 4 to 5 days (a little longer for bigger queens).
- Do not remove the black divider inside the test tube (between the two cotton stoppers) — it keeps the ants safe in transit. It has a hole, and the queen and all workers pass through it without any issue.
- 👑 A Carebara queen on her own will not make it. Always start with a colony of at least 100 workers — majors are a bonus, not a must.

🏠 Setting up the natural ant farm

- 🌿 Carebara must be grown in a natural setup, such as our Natural Eco Ant Farm — we do not recommend a standard pre-formed nest for this species.
- No connection is needed: remove the cotton stopper and place the ants' test tube inside the farm. Once the colony has moved out, leave the tube in place for at least another 14 days (ants sometimes leave brood behind), then remove it.
- 🪴 Furnish the farm with live plants (a small succulent or cactus), stones, driftwood and twigs for shade and climbing.
- 💧 Lay 2 to 3 extra cotton-plugged water tubes on the substrate — they give drinking water and help hold humidity.
- 🌡️ Heat one side only, so the colony can choose its temperature, and fix a digital temperature and humidity meter in a corner to check 27–29°C and 90–100%.
- ☀️ Place the farm in normal daylight, never direct sunlight. Avoid windows, radiators and heaters, vibrating surfaces, speakers and TVs, strong smells such as the kitchen, and busy walkways. Keep a steady room temperature, with gentle heating to hold 27–29°C.

🍯 Feeding

- 🍯 Sugars for worker energy: our organic ant honey (lab-tested at 81% carbohydrate) or Best Ants UK Ant Nectar (90% dextrose, an even richer energy source) — never sugar water or home-made mixes.

- 🥩 Protein for the queen and brood: Best Ants UK Protein Jelly or NextSwarm Cricket Mash. Keep protein jelly in the fridge at all times once opened. Marauders need plenty of protein — feed three times a week once the colony is growing.
- 🌱 They harvest seeds too: a small dish of chia seeds is a welcome extra, and a strong colony can empty it within minutes.
- Serve protein jelly and seeds on a small piece of tin foil — it keeps the sand clean and stops mould where they nest.
- 🦗 Live food (mealworms, crickets, locusts) is only for established colonies, never small ones. All bought live food carries tiny mites that can destroy a colony, so always scald it first: hold it with tweezers in just-boiled water (no longer bubbling) for 10 to 15 seconds, then chop it in half and serve on a small tin foil tray. An established colony can clear a dozen crickets in one session, so feed generously and remove leftovers after 2 days.

💧 Watering the nest

- 💧 Use **distilled or purified water only** — never tap, rainwater or bottled mineral water, even boiled. They carry minerals and microbes that turn a setup green with mould.
- Water the substrate surface 1 to 3ml at a time, away from the meter, then wait at least a day before adding more — the water has to soak in before the meter shows it.
- Keep the nesting substrate humid (90–100%) but never waterlogged.

🌡️ Temperature and winter

- 🌴 No hibernation. Carebara affinis comes from a warm climate and must stay at 27–29°C all year round — in a UK home this means gentle heating in the cooler months.
- Use the Advanced Heating System Small 4W warming no more than a quarter of the nest, on the side opposite the water inlet, so the ants can choose their temperature. For a colony still in its test tube, use the Heating Mat with Thermostat Small 4W and heat only about 25mm of the tube, at the end opposite the water — never lay the whole tube on the mat.
- Never let the colony get cold, and never expose it to abrupt temperature changes.

🤩 Did you know?

- A young larva can turn into a pupa in as little as 8 days.
- Some sellers pass Carebara affinis off as diversa — the queen's size gives it away: around 17mm for affinis, 25mm for diversa.

⭐ Golden rules | Never break these

- 🚫 Never put ants in a fridge, and never expose them to abrupt temperature changes. Cold does not kill a colony instantly — the ants get sick and die over the following days — and prolonged cold near freezing damages the sperm a queen stores from her nuptial flight, so she may never lay fertile eggs again.
- 🚫 Never use gel ant farms, Ytong or concrete nests, or DIY nests.
- 🚫 Never use tap, rain or mineral water, even boiled.
- 🚫 Never move a colony into a nest too early, and never tip or shake ants out of their tube.
- 🚫 Never disturb the colony with tapping or handling — vibration stresses the queen and she can stop laying or eat her eggs.
- ☀️ Never keep the farm in the dark: ants need daylight for their circadian rhythm. Daylight yes — direct sunlight never.
- 🧱 Escape artists: keep a fresh PTFE band around the top inner edge of the outworld lid at all times, and never leave the lid open.
- 🚫 Never release this species into the wild — a colony raised in an ant farm would not survive. If you can no longer keep it, visit our ants adoption page and ask us whether we can adopt it.

🛒 Recommended for this species

Carebara affinis colonies | **Natural Eco Ant Farm** | **Natural Eco Ant Farm Large**
Advanced Heating System 4W | **PTFE Escape Barrier** | **Protein Jelly** | **Cricket Mash**
Organic Honey | **Ant Nectar**

📚 These care notes cover the essentials only. Please read the full ant farm setup guide and our Carebara diversa guide from A to Z — we recommend printing both for a successful ant-keeping experience. Questions? Message us through our contact form — we are always happy to help. 💚

Written and reviewed by the Best Ants UK team, keeping ants since 1997.