**BEST ANTS UK | ANT CARE SHEET**

Keeping ants since 1997

**Intermediate**

# *Formica perpilosa*

Desert Formica

A hairy, red-and-black field ant from the dry south-west of North America. Fast, bold and quick-growing when kept warm and well fed.

ORIGIN

**South-western USA, Mexico**

Deserts near moisture, river banks, gardens

NEST TEMPERATURE

**24–28°C**

Best around 26°C, never much above 29°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

**Short winter rest**

Steady 5–10°C for 6–10 weeks, only in a hibernation unit; or room temperature

MOVE TO A NEST

**10+ workers**

15–20 is better

SIZE

**Queen 7–8 mm**

Workers about 4–5 mm, very hairy

COLONY

**One queen**

Up to a few thousand workers

## Food

- **Proteins:** Protein Jelly (keep in the fridge) or Cricket Mash; extra protein whenever larvae appear
- **Carbohydrates:** organic Ant Honey or Ant Nectar, far better than sugar water or home-made mixes
- 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.

## 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 26°C
- 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, and we don't encourage importing ants
- Workers are timid and jumpy in the nest but bold outside; they spray formic acid on food, which is normal
- Never release: it is 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.