BEST ANTS UK | ANT CARE SHEET

Keeping ants since 1997

Intermediate

Myrmecocystus semirufus

Half-red honeypot ant

A bold, sun-loving honeypot ant from the desert mountains of California and Mexico, with a rusty-red head and thorax and a dark gaster. A fast daytime hunter that stores nectar in its repletes.

ORIGIN

Southern California and northern Baja California

Desert mountain slopes, oak and juniper woodland

NEST TEMPERATURE

26–29°C

Heater set to 28°C under a quarter of the nest

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 13–14 mm

Workers about 4–8 mm, red head and thorax

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; a keen hunter and scavenger of small insects
- Brood takes about 7–9 weeks from egg to worker; fast, active workers, 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.