BEST ANTS UK | ANT CARE SHEET

Keeping ants since 1997

Intermediate

Myrmecocystus kennedyi

Citrus honeypot ant

A sun-loving honeypot ant from the deserts and sagebrush of the western USA, with a bright orange queen. A North American ant, not sold by Best Ants UK and possibly illegal or impossible to import to the UK.

ORIGIN

Western USA, NW Mexico

Idaho and Oregon to Baja California; open, gritty desert soil

NEST TEMPERATURE

26–30°C

With a cooler area; heater at 28°C under one 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 50–60%

On the dry side; outworld about 50%, never watered

WINTER

No hibernation

Keep warm all year; an optional 2–3 month slowdown at room temperature (about 20°C) is fine, never in year one

MOVE TO A NEST

10+ workers

15–20 is better, a queen on her own too

SIZE

Queen about 11–13 mm

Workers 4.5–8 mm, orange-red with a dark gaster

COLONY

One queen

Hundreds in year one, more than 1,000 later

Food

- **Proteins:** Protein Jelly (keep in the fridge) or Cricket Mash. Live food only for established colonies: scalded, cut in half

- **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; leftovers out after 2 days. Founding queen: a tiny drop of protein jelly on tin foil once a week

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%. Too much water is worse than too little.
- 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); Nest + Outworld option if you already have your ants; 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. Test tube: heating cable at the stopper end only
- Daylight, never direct sunlight; away from windows, radiators, vibrations, speakers and kitchens
- Escape risk: high, fast workers. 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 never encourage importing ants
- Forages by day in the wild; repletes store nectar and hang from the chamber ceilings
- No sting, but quick and can bite. 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.