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Caresheet for your *Camponotus aethiops* (5 pages)

Colonyform: Monogyne (Polymorph workers)

Queen size: 13-14mm Shiny Black

Workers size: 5-10mm Shiny black (extremely polymorph)

Food: honey water and insects

Temp: 18-28°C

Humidity: 50-60%

Founding: clausal without feeding

Colony size: 1-300 workers

Hibernation: 4-5 months at 5-9°C

Arrival of your ants:

- Queen doesn't usually need feeding until her first workers arrive (if she has brood you can feed her some honey water 1-part honey to 3 parts water mix)
- First thing is to make sure your queen is alive and store the test tube she is contained in, within a dark place away from direct sun light! Make sure temp is not above **25 Degrees Celsius** (room temp). If you use a heat mat make sure you have a thermostat and a glass thermometer to record temperature aim for 24-28 degrees Celsius for your colony anything above 30 will cook them.

- If you have queen with eggs/brood wrap test tube in tin foil and only check on her every 3-4 days for 2 minutes until her first workers come as they stress easily at the foundation stage and can eat eggs and brood and could die.
- Do not transfer the colony to a nest for at least 72 hours after arrival and make sure the ants have access to food and water inside the nest
- The test tube should be sufficient enough to house her for the summer at least the first 10-20 workers.
- Protein shakes refrigerate and use within first 2 months
- **Keep the test tube moist!** The water in the bottom of the test tube will keep the colony hydrated until it runs dry then you can pipette 3-4 drops of water onto the cotton once a week or do a test tube change, I recommend it.
- You can check online information how to do a test tube set up and change the test tube, YouTube has some good videos on this it will also give you information on how to change ants to a new test tube.

Feeding your ants:

- You can feed them dead small insects which you can crush like flies, crickets, grasshoppers for example. **Insects are needed for brood development** (can feed them live food when the colony has more workers say 50 +)
- Boil insects before you give them to your colonies just place in boiling water to kill microbes.
- Antsrus protein shakes are good convenient way to feed your queens and workers all they need

(Feeding protein shakes: pipette two drops the size of the queen's head midway into the test tube, if you pipette too much you can use a cotton bud to remove the excess. Clean this off every 2-3 days and replace it with fresh load)

- Ants need protein for egg and brood growth
- You can give your colony honey water so just buy some honey from your local shop and just add some water to it and place a tiny drop into the test tube.
- In an ant's nest feed the ants every **2-3 days** and remove any uneaten remains and discard them after this time period.

Hibernation:

- Ants hibernate when winter kicks in as food is scarce in the wild. They need to **hibernate from late October/ early November till late February/ early April** keep them in a cool area around 10 Degrees Celsius
- **After hibernation Gradually increase the temperature of the colony to room temp to prevent toxicity build up**
- **Colonies have already been hibernating so you can skip hibernation till next year or have a mini-4-week hibernation in February**
- This maximises the **queen's life expectancy** and her **egg laying yield**.
- You can give them a **drop of honey** water during **hibernation but they don't need any more than that. (keep the colony supplied with water)**

Eventually ants will outgrow the tube which can happen rather fast say when there are around 10 or more workers would therefore advise you to buy an ant's nest.

For transferring the ants to a nest, I recommend placing the test tube into the outworld of the nest and keeping the ant's nest well hydrated to attract the ants to move and keep away from direct sunlight they could take weeks to transfer they are cautious 😊.

Ant nests:

Sand/soil:

- Allows ants to dig their ant nests, some nests consist of two glass panels where you can put sand or soil in the middle (don't use gel farms as a substrate as they promote mould growth replace with sand instead)
- Tanks can be used as they provide a large area for nests to be established and the space above the soil can be used as a forage area
- Tanks have the ability to replicate outdoor environments which is good

Acrylic Ants nests:

- Great for viewing
- Mould proof
- You can connect an acrylic nest to a forage area if they can come as all in one nest, the nest can directly attach to forage area.

Y-tong nests:

- Aerated concrete block that can be carved manually or with machinery to create chambers
- A clear acrylic cover allows excellent viewing of ants
- Moisture can be controlled by placing nest in a tray filled with water
- You can connect to a forage area (out world) or an out world can be placed on top of the nest connected by tubing
- Excellent viewing for ants

- All queens come with a 14-day warranty from the day of dispatch (the queens have to remain in their original test tube for this to be valid) but photographic evidence is required if the queens die

Gel ants' nests as a substrate are not suitable for queen ants and workers!

You can convert gel ant farms using clay soil mix as substrate instead of gel which you can easily buy online. Google "clay soil"

FAQ's:

Why is my queen not laying eggs or brood not developing?

It is possible she is hibernating you need to raise the temperature to around 20-25 degrees Celsius so the colony will be "woken" up from hibernation this is generally room temp of your average home.

Questions or more products such as nests and more ant's email:

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Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/antsrus1/>

Website: www.antsrus.com (Lowest prices if you buy direct)

