



Caresheet for your *Lasius umbratus* (5 pages long)

Name: *Lasius umbratus*

Colony form: monogyn

Sizes: Queen: 9mm, workers: 3-5mm

Known as the Yellow Shadow-ant. *Lasius umbratus* is a social parasite. A queen in the wild will infiltrate a colony for example of *Lasius niger* and kill the queen and the workers will nurse the *Lasius umbratus* and she will start laying eggs and the *Lasius niger* workers will raise them as their own. A very interesting species for sure!

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)
- The test tube should be sufficient enough to house her for the summer or 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**
- 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 anymore than that. (keep the colony supplied with water)**
- Lasius species grow best when the temperature is around 23-25 degrees as this maximises their growth and egg laying yield

Eventually ants will outgrow the tube which can happen rather fast say when there are around 30 or more workers would therefore advise you to buy an ant's nest.

Ant nests:

I recommend transferring your ants to a nest when there is at least 10 workers or more that way they can care for the queen in a new environment. Colonies fail because the queen is transferred to a big nest where you can't care for her and she dehydrates be patient and wait for the first 10 workers and keep the colony hydrated in the ant farm and test tube.

To transfer the colony to a nest, place the test tube into the out world of the nest and remove the cotton from the exit of the tube. If the out world is too small tip them into the out world using the tube. Wait at least 72 hours after arrival before transferring into a nest.

Make sure the nest has ventilation so the colony can breathe especially in the “antworld” nests replace the rubber bung with $\frac{1}{4}$ of a ball of cotton wool so the ants have ventilation. If this is not done the ants will appear in a dead like state pop them back into the original test tube with cotton wool at the end and they should come back to life.

I recommend acrylic style nests or a natural tank set up is ideal or y-tong nest.

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

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 European 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"

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

antsrus1@gmail.com

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

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

We also have an extensive FAQ page on our website

Our caresheets provide a good foundation of knowledge but we do recommend doing extra research on your species.

