



Caresheet for your *Myrmica Rubra* Colony (5 pages long)

Common name: European fire ant

Colony form: Polygene (Can have more than 1 queen)

Sizes: Queen 4-7mm, workers:4-6mm

Arrival of your ants:

Warning: *Myrmica* have a sting so be aware it feels like being stung by a stinging nettle.

- 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

Feeding your ants:

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- 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.
- This species is semi-claustral so will need feeding every 4 days, I recommend insect protein such as meal worms chopped and pre

boiled, they will also accept honey water, be aware this species drowns easily so any liquids place on a small ball of cotton wool.

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)**

Ants nest would be needed for this species:

Ant nests:

Myrmica rubra need high nest humidity and a well hydrated nest, because in their natural environment they nest in dead wood.

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 you can spray warm water onto the soil to help replicate their high humid environment

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 which can control the humidity of the nest
- 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"

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)

