



Caresheet for your Lasius Niger (6 pages long)

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.
- You can transfer the colony to a nest 72 hours after arrival and make sure the ants have access to food and water inside the nest (14 day guarantee is void once ants are transferred to a nest from the original test tube I recommend waiting at least 2 weeks before nest transfer to keep the warranty)
- The test tube should be sufficient enough to house her for the summer or at least the first 10-20 workers we recommend waiting to 10 plus workers before nest transfer.
- 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 (you can also roll a small ball of cotton about the size of the queens head and place the liquid protein shake on this inside the test tube to help avoid ants drowning), 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 batch)

- 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 1 part honey to 3 parts water mix.
- In an ant's nest feed the ants every **2-3 days** and remove any uneaten remains and discard them after this time.

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)**
- 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 are 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 can 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

Live arrival guarantee we ensure the live arrival of the queen only upon delivery contact us within 24-48 hours of receiving the Queen dead on arrival with a picture of the dead queen and the original workers. DO NOT TRANSFER THE DEAD QUEEN OR WORKERS TO A NEST AS THIS VOIDS YOUR WARRANTY. For our additional 14-day guarantee for European species the Queen and workers must be kept in the original test tube sealed with the cotton and care sheet instructions followed if you want to keep this additional guarantee do not transfer to a nest or your warranty is VOIDED (we recommend you keep the 14-day warranty).

We have no control over the environment outside the test tube and have no influence in the conditions the responsibility once placed outside the test tube within the 14-day period the responsibility is with the buyer. 9 times out of 10 colonies die in the nest due to lack of water access, food, temperature, oxygen or stress due to vibrations or exposure to excess light. If your colony does fail inside a nest contact us, we can advise what went wrong but it is up to you to buy another ant colony, you will succeed but sometimes it does not work the first time. Research is key to success with ant keeping and follow our guides.

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 ants 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.

