



READY TO GO?

WAITING IS THE FIRST THING.

That's right, sit back and let your queen wait in the dark for the next hour or 2, nice and quiet so she relaxes after her long journey. It will de-stress her and make her much less grouchy when you meet her.

OPEN AND CHECK HER

Once calm, carefully open and check her to make sure she made the journey ok. When you see she is happy, put her back away at the right temp then check her weekly for workers. (some queens need feeding while founding, you can see if your species does on the next page).

If she has workers now, feed her and resume weekly checks until 30+ workers where she will be ready for her first nest.

Try and keep checks to a minimum (we know it is hard, we just want to watch ours all day too!) but she will thank you for it with extra brood and a lower chance of eating her eggs.



FIRST BITE

Once you have workers add a tiny drop of our very own sugar snap (even species not crazy for sugar could use the extra energy when they first found). Remove uneaten snap the following week and replace with protein, visa versa.

SNUGLY

*The temperature of the nest should sit between **The temperatures given on the fact sheet overleaf** - ideally with a gradient. Try to monitor it though as exceeding 30 degrees could make your queen become infertile and should be avoided if at all possible.*

HUMIDITY IS KEY

Temperature and humidity, when perfect can increase brood growth and help your queen produce bigger, faster growing colonies. Keep your nest humidity within the target range and remember to water the nest weekly.

TEST TUBE CHANGES

Try to avoid changes unless you see a discoloured water, black mold or they run out of water. If vital then we have provided a spare tube and cotton wool for your tube change.

Attach the 2 tubes together using a plaster (or something breathable) leaving a 1mm gap between tubes as you affix the plaster. Leaving the old tube exposed to light make the new tube dark and warm.

Please do not force a move, your queen could take weeks. She will move over when she is ready

LASIUS UMBRATUS

THE PARASITE LASIUS

A social Parasite - Beginner

Umbratus are a beautiful amber coloured species of ant which is much less common than Niger, Flavus or Grandis despite being found in all the same environments as them. This is because they primarily live underground and many die in search of (or obtaining) a host colony to steal.

Lasius Umbratus are unable to found a colony independently and require workers to provide food. Taking over existing brood and workers from another queen provides the workforce needed to kick start a colony.

Founding a colony for any queen is risky to say the least. It is believed up to 97% of queens do not make it past 12 months since nuptials. After waking up from hibernation in March the Lasius Niger queens from the previous July are hard at work sending out nuptials and raising brood to bring their colony to life. Inadvertently one of their biggest threats is about to have a nuptial flight too.

In roughly May, Lasius Umbratus queens leave their nests and knowing a full niger colony means certain death, a new colony with less than 100 workers means she can deliberately get attacked by them and flee. After several attacks she adopts enough scent to enter the nest (fooling the workers) and she kills the queen, adopting the workers as her own taking and taking place as the new queen.

The Umbratus queen has a new workforce and can lay her eggs knowing they will be taken care of.

The reason you may not notice them is because they live almost exclusively underground, subterranean aphids are farmed between root systems to provide sugars and soil dwelling insect provide their proteins.

They are a fascinating and pretty species which although difficult to found (you need host workers and brood) they will reward you with a wonderful colony if you get it right.

Colony Size

Up to 6,000 - 9,000 workers

Queen Age

Up to 16 years

Monogyne - one queen per nest

Social Parasite - needs workers and brood to found colony

Temperature

Room Temperature 21 to 24 degrees

Hibernation

October to March at 5 to 8 degrees

Polymorphic (Different size casts)

No

Sting | Bite | Spray

No

Diet

Insects, Sugars, Carbs

Nest Type

Acrylic, Sand, Earth, Ytong, Plaster, Glass

Size

Queen - 7mm-8mm

Worker - 3mm-5mm

Development

Egg to Adult Worker - 5 to 6 weeks



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