



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



APHAENOGASTER DULCINEAE

THE SUBTERRANEAN DWELLER

The Underground Species - Beginner

The first thing you will notice about the Dulcinea is the very distinctive colouring, much like a *Lasius Flavus* they look soft and bright. This is because like the *Flavus* the *Dulcinea* also spends its time below the surface and will only come above ground if enlarging their entrance or to release queens for nuptials.

Dulcinea are found across the Iberian peninsula and are in abundance in places where conditions are right, typically you can expect to only see them in areas with a high moisture table. This is why parks and fields are their ideal place to lay claim to land. The root system retains moisture making something consistent.

Roots, in turn also present them with a large amount of the carbs they need, by capturing Aphids they move them around like cattle ensuring they have food to eat and conditions to breed so they can keep their fill of honeydew. (Honeydew is a sweet secretion which Aphids release, it is loved by the ants and is high in sugar)

All ants need their proteins too, and this can be done underground also, *Dulcinea* are extremely fast at tunneling and they can use this skill to hunt subterranean food sources like Earthworms, Spring-tails, Woodlouse, Larvae e.t.c

With a life underground the main risk is temperature and humidity issues. But like *Flavus* or termites these girls use a well constructed mound to regulate humidity in their nest. For a colony of up to 10,000 workers per queen this colony will look bigger from the surface entrance.

If you are looking for a shy, timid species which will be easy to keep then *Dulcinea* is a great easy keeping species. Their ideal life would be somewhere they can dig, but a dark Ytong nest would also be more than adequate if kept hydrated. You won't need to invest in a large outworld as they will seldom use it.

Colony Size

Up to 10,000 workers

Queen

Age - Up to 20 years

Monogyne - One Queen per colony

Fully Claustal - No food until first workers

Temperature & Humidity

Nest 21 to 24 degrees | Outworld 18 to 28 degrees

Nest 50%-80% | Outworld 30% to 50%

Hibernation

Yes - November to February at 12-15 degrees

Polymorphic (Different size casts)

No

Sting | Bite | Spray

No

Diet

Insects, Sugars, Carbs

Nest Type

Acrylic, Sand, Earth, Ytong, Plaster, Glass

Size

Queen - 6mm-7mm

Worker - 6mm-7mm

Development

Egg to Adult Worker - 5 to 8 weeks



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