MESSOR ARENARIUS
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 two, 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 temperature then check her bi-weekly until you see she has workers.

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 BITES

*Once you have workers you can then provide a few of the **chia seeds** that we send with all of our Harvester Species. First workers would appreciate you pre-crushing the seeds for them for the next few feeds too (cracking shells is hard work).*

They will do the rest, chewing them into ant bread to feed to their brood and themselves. Seeds make a great all round carbohydrate and protein rich food source!. They may occasionally need sugars or extra protein, but try to limit it to a bi-weekly treat.

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 have negative affects on your queen.*

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 but remember to allow a small gap for air to get in. Allow your queen to move into the new tube on her own. Make the new tube dark and the old tube light, it helps her decide!

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

MESSOR ARENARIUS

THE SOLO FORAGER

The 2nd largest species of Messor in the world - (Heat Required)

Within our ant kingdoms there are few wonders more deserving of our admiration than the Messor Arenarius. Found in Northern Africa and the Middle East they are the largest harvester ant in the Middle East and second only to the Messor Cephalotes in the world.

Unlike most other messor's the Arenarius is not a trail forager (ants that discover and harvest using long busy trails of pheromones which other workers follow) Instead they are individual foragers. They explore and search sporadically and as such move slower and collect less seeds than other messor species usually would.

The individual foraging trait gives way to a few characteristics that the Arenarius display. Firstly they are not very aggressive when foraging, they run from danger and avoid it (a must given they are not in trails with large numbers of support), as such the rarely consume insects as they would not challenge one unless it is an easy target. Instead they will harvest dead insects that are carry-able. Messor Arenarius has a diet made up from seeds and grains to the value of around 90%.

Their "run from danger" approach should not be confused with passive though. In defense of a colony they are avid warriors. When intruders loom their slower response is met with a majors bite, majors who are up to 18mm. Even the media workers challenge the size of a Messor Barbarus queen.

Where most messor species are extremely sensitive to light and vibration the Arenarius is much more protective of her colony and less affected by it, usually up to the point the first majors arrive. It is not uncommon to see your Arenarius queen charge a threat with mandibles open wide. In our experience, even in small colonies of 50 or so workers, the queen will still investigate trouble herself ready to take on the intruder.

In the wild colonies grow to between 800 and 1,500 workers. This is logical as their foraging method is slower and they are much larger than other harvesters. Although there are 2 studies (the first states the above and the second (earlier one) states 5,000 workers, however it has no demonstrable reasoning like the later, newer study).

KEY STATS

Queen

Age - Up to 13 years (estimated)

Monogyne - One queen per nest

Fully Claustral - No food until first workers

Temperature & Humidity

Nest 22 to 26 Degrees | Outworld 25 to 30 Degrees

Nest 50% to 70% | Seed Store 30% to 50%

Diapause

Will slow for a period in winter months

November to February at 15 Degrees

Polymorphic (Yes)

Minor Worker - 5mm to 8mm

Media Worker - 9mm to 13mm

Major Worker - 14mm to 18mm

Bite

They will bite if threatened

Diet

Seeds, Nuts, Grains, Occasional Sugar, Occasional extra protein.

Always ensure a constant fresh water supply is provided

Nest Type

Natural, Acrylic, Sand, Earth, Glass

Development

Egg to Adult Worker - 8 to 10 weeks

18mm-22mm

5mm-18mm

800 to 1,500

Ant Antics
Priory Street
Carmarthen
SA31 1LS
antantics.co.uk
info@antantics.co.uk