



## FORMICA RUFA 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 begin providing them with food. Always remove uneaten food after 48 hours.*

*Water is essential all of the time but weekly feedings are a good bet at first (for food). Sugars provide carbohydrates and our snaps is the perfect treat for that. You can also make your own, use fruits like apple, banana, grape e.t.c and of course honey is fantastic too.*

*For proteins start small, chopped insects, protein shakes e.t.c*

### 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.*



# FORMICA RUFA THE RED WOOD ANT

## Near Threatened | Advanced Species -

Formica Rufa are famous among wood ants, they are so well known because of the mounds in which they build. Across Europe and Russia they use earth, twigs and forest floor material to build their nests above ground up to 2m high. These nest trap heat and the ants can thermally regulate their environment using the layout and size.

*Rufa are a parasite queen, to found her colony she must first locate a small host nest, deceive the workers into confusion and kill the queen of the colony she has invaded. Only then will the workers be completely fooled into thinking she is and always has been the rightful queen. Although they are well known to return home and add to the queen population of their birth nest after mating.*

We award Rufa an advanced keeping status because of the incredible nests they can build, their formic acid spray distance and their aggressive nature. Controlling them in captivity as a fully grown colony would be somewhat impossible and the growth of your colony will need careful diet controls, your setup will need ventilation and your attentiveness to their requirements will need to be on-point.

In the wild rufa are relentless, although their primary diet is honeydew from aphids they will take on weaker prey with their impressive numbers, spraying acid onto their bite wounds until the prey is subdued. They may be fast, alert and deadly but they are also somewhat clumsy.

Rufa are also prone to infection and moist mounds can cause mold. But they have a solution to this. They collect resin from the wounds of the coniferous trees around their nests and treat it with formic acid. This resin is used by the tree to be an antiseptic, fungicide and mold inhibitor, the Rufa strategically place it around the entrances and ants entering and leaving will walk over it to disinfect themselves. This is why we provide a piece of organic resin with your colony so they can continue this behaviour as they see fit.

This is not a species for the faint-hearted, multi-queen colonies in nature can house up to 400,000 workers with over 100 queens. You will need to be prepared and vigilant in your keeping but the reward of seeing this almost endangered species thrive will be worth every second.

## KEY STATS

### Queen

Age - Up to 15 years (estimated)

Polygyne - 100's of queens per nest

Parasitic - Donor workers and food required in founding

### Temperature & Humidity

Nest 22 to 26 Degrees | Outworld 20 to 30 Degrees

Nest 45% to 65% | Outworld 30% to 60%

### Diapause / Hibernation

Yes - October through March

### Polymorphic (Yes)

Minor Worker - 4mm to 8mm

Major Worker - 8mm to 10mm

### Bite | Acid

They will bite if threatened | Acid with long range spray

### Diet

Sugars, Proteins (insects)

Always ensure a constant fresh water supply is provided

### Nest Type

Natural, Wood, Earth, Glass

### Development

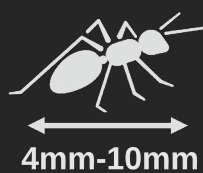
Egg to Adult Worker - 8 to 12 weeks

### Additional

The provision of organic (non heat-treated) conifer resin is advised



12mm



4mm-10mm



10,000 to 15,000



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