

Aphaenogaster subterranea

(Latreille, 1798)

A slender, secretive forest ant that nests under stones, hunts quietly in the leaf litter and carries sweet liquids home on soaked grains of soil.



Photo: Philipp Hoenle (myrmecophil), CC0 1.0

At a glance



NEST TEMPERATURE
20–26 °C

In the nest



NEST HUMIDITY
50–65 %

In the nest



HIBERNATION
8–12 °C

Nov – Feb



NUPTIAL FLIGHTS
Jul – Sep



WORKERS
3–5 mm

All the same size



QUEEN
7–8 mm

One queen



COLONY SIZE
Reaches 2,000 workers

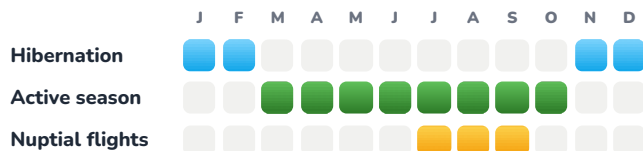
Growth: Moderate



ESCAPE RISK
Low

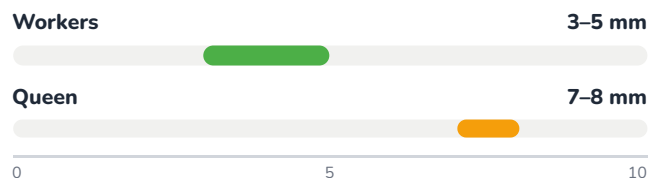
Calm ants that rarely try to escape

Year at a glance



Months for temperate Europe and the Mediterranean. The weather decides the exact days, so flights can come earlier or later where you live.

Sizes on the same scale



Care at a glance

FOOD

Insects

Sugar

BEST NESTS

1. Ytong nest
2. Naturalistic setup
3. Sandwich nest

WHY THIS RATING

- ✓ Calm workers that rarely try to escape
- ✓ Fully claustral: the queen needs no food until her first workers arrive
- ⚠ The workers can sting

Notes from keepers

TIP

Be patient with a young colony: it starts slowly, and keepers report only a handful of workers after the first months, then faster growth once the colony has settled in.

WATCH OUT

Do not let the whole nest dry out or swing between extremes. This is a species of damp, shady forests, and the German ant database notes that the colony develops more slowly when it is kept too dry, so keep a damp zone for the brood.