

Camponotus herculeanus

(Linnaeus, 1758)

Hercules ant

A cold-hardy black giant of northern conifer forests that carves its nest into old stumps and standing trees.



Photo: Philipp Hoenle (myrmecophil), CC0 1.0

At a glance



NEST TEMPERATURE

18–25 °C

In the nest



NEST HUMIDITY

50–60 %

In the nest



HIBERNATION

5–8 °C

Oct – Mar



NUPTIAL FLIGHTS

May – Jun

Hot days, Humid air



WORKERS

6–11 mm

majors up to 13 mm



QUEEN

14–17 mm

One queen



COLONY SIZE

Reaches 5,000 workers

Growth: Moderate



ESCAPE RISK

Medium

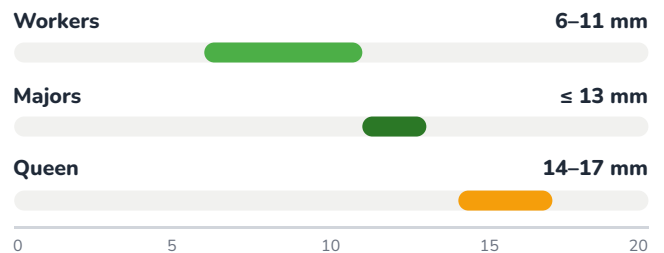
Keep an escape barrier on the outworld

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

Sugar

Insects

BEST NESTS

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

WHY THIS RATING

- ✓ Fully claustral: the queen needs no food until her first workers arrive
- ⚠ Curious workers: keep an escape barrier on the outworld
- ⚠ Needs a cold hibernation, for example in a fridge

Notes from keepers

TIP

Keep the nest on the cool side and add only a small warm spot, such as a heat cable under one end. The colony moves its brood to the warmth by itself, and constant heat is not needed for this northern species.

WATCH OUT

Wooden nests dry out easily. One keeper lost a whole season when colonies in dry wooden nests stagnated and ate their brood, so give every wooden nest a damp chamber or a water supply.