

Messor ebeninus

Santschi, 1927

Ebony harvester ant

A glossy ebony-black harvester ant of the Middle East that stores its seeds upstairs and raises its brood in damp soil far below.



Photo: Moshe Neeman (נחשון נאמן, moshe_neeman), CC BY 4.0

At a glance



NEST TEMPERATURE

22–28 °C

In the nest



NEST HUMIDITY

50–60 %

Seed granaries: 30–50 %



HIBERNATION

15–18 °C

Jan – Feb



NUPTIAL FLIGHTS

Nov – Dec

After rain



WORKERS

4–8 mm

majors up to 10 mm



QUEEN

11–12 mm

One queen



COLONY SIZE

Reaches 5,000 workers

Growth: Moderate

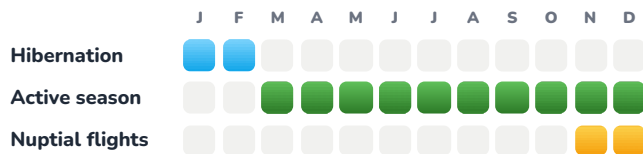


ESCAPE RISK

Low

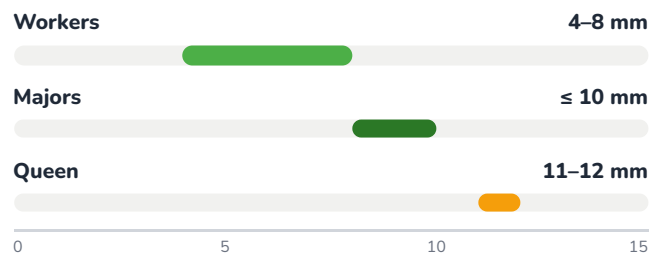
Calm ants that rarely try to escape

Year at a glance



Months in the native range of the species. The weather decides the exact days, and colonies kept indoors can follow a different rhythm.

Sizes on the same scale



Care at a glance

FOOD

Seeds

Insects

Sugar

BEST NESTS

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

WHY THIS RATING

- ✓ Calm workers that rarely try to escape
- ✓ Fully claustrol: the queen needs no food until her first workers arrive
- ✓ Stores seeds, so a missed feeding is not a problem
- ⚠ Needs a humidity gradient, with dry granaries and humid brood chambers

Notes from keepers

TIP

Copy the two floors of the wild nest: a dry upper part for the seed store and a damp lower part for the queen and brood. In a Ytong or plaster nest, water only one end and leave the other end dry.

WATCH OUT

A queen caught after the autumn flight lays only in late winter, so a tube without eggs for months is normal. A young colony then grows slowly: in that study it had only a few dozen workers by the next autumn.