

Messor structor

(Latreille, 1798)

A rough-skinned brown harvester ant that shares its nest with many queens and spreads by splitting off new colonies.



Photo: Philipp Hoenle (myrmecophil), CC0 1.0

At a glance



NEST TEMPERATURE

22–28 °C

In the nest



NEST HUMIDITY

50–70 %

Seed granaries: 30–50 %



HIBERNATION

8–12 °C

Nov – Feb



NUPTIAL FLIGHTS

Apr – Jun



WORKERS

4–8 mm

majors up to 10 mm



QUEEN

9–11 mm

Several queens



COLONY SIZE

Reaches 5,000 workers

Growth: Fast

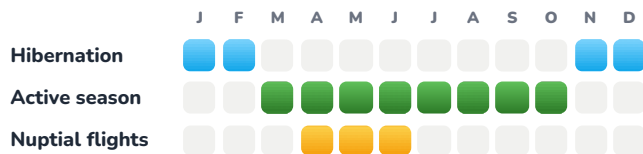


ESCAPE RISK

Low

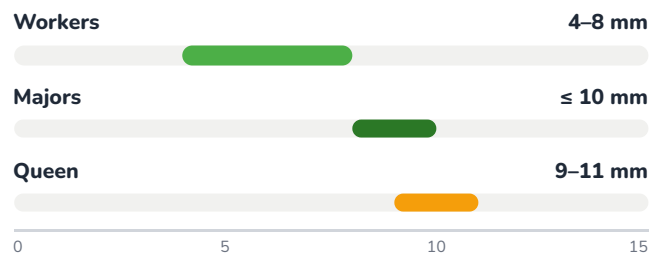
Calm ants that rarely try to escape

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

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 claustral: 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

Start with a queen that comes with workers, or put several queens together. French keepers report that lone queens often fail to found a colony in captivity, because the species seems to start new nests mostly by budding.

WATCH OUT

The workers dig into aerated concrete and plaster, mostly when they run short of space. Coat a Ytong nest with mortar, tile glue or resin plaster, or use acrylic, and never leave thin walls.