

Oecophylla smaragdina

(Fabricius, 1775)

Asian weaver ant

Long-legged tree ants that stitch living leaves into nests with silk from their own larvae, and an expert-level challenge to keep.



Photo: Lek Khauv, CC BY 4.0

At a glance



NEST TEMPERATURE

24–30 °C

In the nest



NEST HUMIDITY

65–85 %

In the nest



HIBERNATION

Not needed



NUPTIAL FLIGHTS

No data yet



WORKERS

5–8 mm

majors up to 10 mm



QUEEN

20–25 mm

One or more queens



COLONY SIZE

Reaches 2,000 workers

Growth: Fast



ESCAPE RISK

High

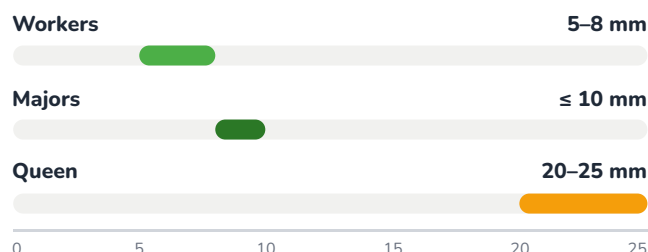
Escape artists: use a closed outworld and a good barrier

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

Sugar

Insects

BEST NESTS

1. Naturalistic setup
2. Test tube setup

WHY THIS RATING

- ✓ Fully claustral: the queen needs no food until her first workers arrive
- ✓ No hibernation to manage
- ⚠ A real escape artist that needs an escape-proof setup
- ⚠ Needs constant warmth all year round

Notes from keepers

TIP

Build the setup around a living, healthy host plant with large, flexible leaves, such as weeping fig (*Ficus benjamina*), coffee or citrus. One keeper's nests on money tree leaves turned brown and had to be rebuilt every few weeks, which stressed a small colony, while nests on coffee and hibiscus lasted for months.

WATCH OUT

Wash the plant, replace its soil and let it stand for a while before the ants move in. Nursery plants are often treated with insecticide, and keepers lost workers to the residues, in one case from new plants that had been washed, repotted and left for months before they joined a running colony.