

Plagiolepis pygmaea

(Latreille, 1798)

A pinhead-sized, sun-loving ant that lives in networks of many-queened nests and slips through the smallest gap.



Photo: Philipp Hoenle (myrmecophil), CC0 1.0

At a glance



NEST TEMPERATURE
21–28 °C

In the nest



NEST HUMIDITY
50–60 %

In the nest



HIBERNATION
10–15 °C

Nov – Feb



NUPTIAL FLIGHTS
Jun – Aug



WORKERS
1.3–2 mm

All the same size



QUEEN
3–4.5 mm

Several queens



COLONY SIZE
Reaches 5,000 workers

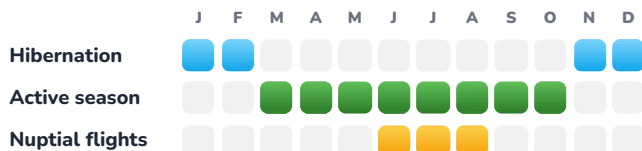
Growth: Moderate



ESCAPE RISK
High

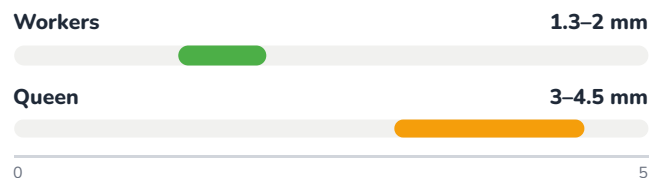
Escape artists: use a closed outworld and a good barrier

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. Sandwich nest
3. Test tube setup

WHY THIS RATING

- ✓ Fully claustral: the queen needs no food until her first workers arrive
- ⚠ A real escape artist that needs an escape-proof setup

Notes from keepers

TIP

Offer sugar as a smear of crystallized honey or on a tiny scrap of foil, and keep any cotton only lightly moist: a single drop or a soggy plug can trap or drown several workers at once.

WATCH OUT

Plan the escape barrier before the first workers hatch, and watch every joint: workers crowd into the thin gap between a test tube and its plug or a connecting tube, and Italian keepers lost many there, either crushed when the plastic expanded again after the winter rest or killed by accident when the plug was opened.