

Pogonomyrmex rugosus

Emery, 1895

Rough harvester ant

A heavy desert seed harvester with deep granaries, a bare disk around its nest and a painful sting.



Photo: Jake Nitta (froggy143), CC BY 4.0

At a glance



NEST TEMPERATURE

26–30 °C

In the nest



NEST HUMIDITY

50–70 %

Seed granaries: 30–50 %



HIBERNATION

13–16 °C

Dec – Feb



NUPTIAL FLIGHTS

Jul – Sep

After rain, Hot days, Humid air



WORKERS

7–9 mm

All the same size



QUEEN

12–14 mm

One queen



COLONY SIZE

Reaches 8,000 workers

Growth: Moderate



ESCAPE RISK

Medium

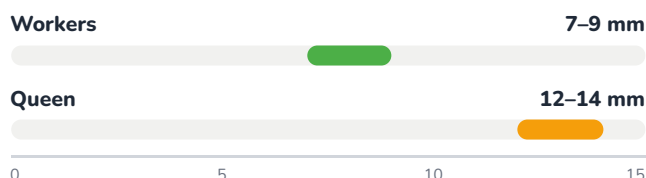
Keep an escape barrier on the outworld

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. Naturalistic setup
2. Ytong nest
3. Acrylic nest

WHY THIS RATING

- ✓ Fully claustral: the queen needs no food until her first workers arrive
- ✓ Stores seeds, so a missed feeding is not a problem
- ⚠ Curious workers: keep an escape barrier on the outworld
- ⚠ Needs a humidity gradient, with dry granaries and humid brood chambers
- ⚠ The workers can sting

Notes from keepers

TIP

Seeds are the staple: offer a mix of small grass and weed seeds such as dandelion, chia, canary seed and millet, plus a few small insects each week. Keep the seed stores dry and clear out seeds that sprout or turn moldy. Sugar liquids are optional, and some keepers lost workers in them, so offer them sparingly.

WATCH OUT

A founding queen needs no food at all, but she does need patience: she does better in sand or dirt where she can dig than in a bare tube, where some queens eat their eggs, and a young colony can stay tiny for months before it takes off. Keep it warm and undisturbed instead of tinkering.