

Solenopsis fugax

(Latreille, 1798)

Thief ant

A tiny underground thief that tunnels into the nests of bigger ants to steal their brood, and slips through almost any gap.



Photo: Philipp Hoenle (myrmecophil), CC0 1.0

At a glance



NEST TEMPERATURE

21–28 °C

In the nest



NEST HUMIDITY

50–70 %

In the nest



HIBERNATION

5–10 °C

Nov – Feb



NUPTIAL FLIGHTS

Aug – Oct

Hot days



WORKERS

1.5–2.5 mm

All the same size



QUEEN

4–6.5 mm

One or more queens



COLONY SIZE

No data yet

Growth: Moderate



ESCAPE RISK

High

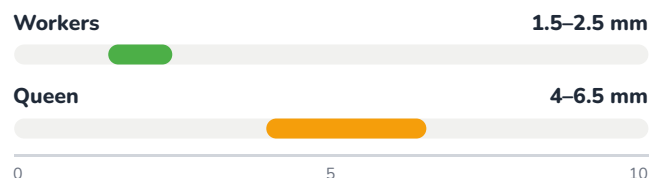
Escape artists: use a closed outworld and a good barrier

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

Insects

Sugar

BEST NESTS

1. Acrylic nest
2. Ytong 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
- ⚠ The workers can sting

Notes from keepers

TIP

Founding is the hard part and many queens die. Keepers get better results when the test tube holds a layer of moist soil or clay, or is closed with a pierced plastic cap backed by cotton, which keeps the air humid. An experienced Italian keeper also advises leaving the young colony in its tube until it is far bigger than other ants would need.

WATCH OUT

Do not trust plaster, hot glue or even silicone to hold these workers: an experienced keeper reports that they dig through all three, that only masonry filler lasted, and that the escapes then come through tube connections and glass joints. Seal every join and keep the whole setup inside a closed box.