

Ant Gear Formicaria

Hydration Instructions



Ant Gear LLC
antgear.com

These instructions explain how to add water to the different styles of Ant Gear nests. Our nests are made with gypsum cement, which is a water absorbent material.

Humidity

Ants need humidity in their nests to keep their eggs and larvae moist so they can grow properly. It also helps prevent the ants from drying out, as they lose water quickly. Additionally, moisture helps regulate the nest's temperature, creating a stable environment for the colony.

Blunt-Tipped Syringe

A blunt-tipped syringe is used to add water to the nest. The water is injected into the nest with the syringe.



Water Reservoir



Insert the blunt tip of the syringe into the silicon tube on the side of the nest, as shown in the photo on the left where an arrow points to the tube. Slowly inject water until the reservoir is about halfway full. The water reservoir helps track the amount of water added, and because it doesn't directly touch the gypsum, the water will be absorbed slowly as it evaporates. Refill the reservoir when it's nearly empty, eliminating the need to guess when to add more water.

Sand Under Gypsum



The entrance hole is marked on the side of the nest with a black dot. Inject the water directly into the entrance hole. The sand serves as a natural buffer, ensuring that excessive water isn't forced into the structure. As you slowly inject the water, pay attention to the entrance hole—once the first few droplets begin to escape, that's your cue to stop. This delicate balance keeps the environment humid without flooding the colony.

Void Underneath Nest



The entrance hole is marked on the side of the nest with a black dot. Inject the water directly into the entrance hole. Our Small Round Nest has an empty void underneath the gypsum which leaves enough space for water. The water level should never touch the plaster as it is absorbed into the gypsum through evaporation.

Leafcutter Nests



Locate the two water ports on either side of the nest. Using a blunt-tipped syringe, quickly inject water into one of the ports, as shown in the photo, until it flows out of the port on the opposite side.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What if I added too much water?

- It's OK! It happens to everyone, especially in the beginning when you are learning how to care for the ants.
- If your nest style has a water reservoir, adding too much water will leak out of the reservoir and absorb into the nest. If this happens, reinsert the syringe and pull back on the plunger to remove excess water.
- If your nest style has sand under the gypsum, this won't happen because the sand will prevent adding too much water. You will know when to stop adding water when it begins to leak out of the entrance hole.
- If your nest style has a void underneath the nest, adding too much water will cause it to absorb into the bottom of the gypsum. If this happens, quickly pull back on the syringe to remove excess water.

The ants completely moved into the outworld. Why won't they live in the nest?

- Ants move to the areas that are best suited for them and the developing brood. For some reason, the outworld is now more hospitable for them. There are a few reasons why they might have moved:
 1. The nest is too dry. Add more water.
 2. The nest is too humid. If you can, remove water by pulling back on the syringe. Don't add any more water until a few days after they have moved back.
 3. The outworld is warmer than the nest. The ants will move the developing brood towards warmth because it helps them grow much faster. If you are using a heat source, such as a heat cable or a heat mat, make sure to move it near the nest and not the outworld. If you aren't using a heat source, consider adding one to the nest.

What do I do if I see mold inside of the nest?

Sometimes ants are less than ideal house guests and they don't take the trash out. Mold eventually kills colonies. Take a good look at the mold with a magnifying glass. If you see yellow mold, you need to remove it as soon as you can by opening the lid to the nest and picking the moldy pieces out with tweezers.

How do I apply heat?

Heat helps ants grow and some species require it in order for brood to develop. The best way to heat the ants is to buy a heat cable and drape the warm part of the cable onto the top or side of the nest. Avoid condensation by placing the heat cable on the side of the nest opposite of the hydration port.