



## OVERVIEW

Myrmecocystus — HoneyPot Ants — are among the most iconic ants in the hobby. Native to the arid deserts of the American Southwest and Mexico, they are best known for their system of living food storage: specialized workers called repletes swell their abdomens to the size of grapes, storing liquid nutrition that sustains the colony through scarce periods. Multiple species are available, ranging from golden-blond to striking red-and-black forms. All share the same core care requirements.

## DIFFICULTY

**INTERMEDIATE – ADVANCED**

Hardy once established, but they require consistent warmth and an uninterrupted sugar supply. Repletes add a layer of fragility — vibrations and nest disturbance can cause injury. Best suited to experienced keepers who can maintain a stable, low-disturbance desert setup.

## TEMPERAMENT

Non-aggressive toward keepers. Stress-sensitive to vibrations, bright light, and frequent disturbance — a significant concern once repletes are present. Not skilled escape artists, but a secure, gapless enclosure is still essential.

## FEEDING

**Protein (primary):** Fruit flies, small mealworms, or cricket pieces 2–3× weekly. Scale prey size with colony size; remove uneaten protein within 24–48 hours.

**Liquid sugars (constant):** Sugar water (1:3), honey water, or Sunburst Ant Nectar. Must be available at all times — repletes depend on continuous sugar access and the colony declines quickly without it.

**Seeds:** Not used. Myrmecocystus are not seed harvesters.

## ANT FARM

Desert-style formicarium with a warm, dry nesting zone. Provide only a small lightly moistened area for brood management. Outworld should be dry, secure, and well-ventilated. Once repletes develop, prioritize a stable location that won't require moving or opening the setup. Avoid gel formicaria and any enclosure with poor airflow or moisture retention.

**Bamboo tube nests are highly recommended** — position them tilted or on their side so repletes can hang from the tube ceiling, mimicking how they suspend themselves in wild underground chambers.

## RECOMMENDED SUPPLIES

- Heat Cable
- Sunburst Ant Nectar
- Liquid Feeder
- Bamboo Tube Nest
- AntVac
- Fluon



## TEMPERATURE

Heat is the most critical variable. Growth stalls significantly below 80°F.

- **Optimal nest range:** 85–90°F
  - **Gradient:** Warmer on one end; cooler zones let the colony self-regulate
  - **No hibernation:** Cold diapause is not required and can be harmful
- Use a heat cable along one side of the nest. Keep heat away from moisture zones to avoid condensation flooding tubes or chambers.

## HUMIDITY

Keep it very low. Myrmecocystus are arid-desert specialists and are harmed by excess moisture. The nest should be predominantly dry with only a small, lightly moistened area for brood. The outworld must remain dry at all times. Avoid dense, moisture-retaining substrates without adequate ventilation.

## GROWTH

No hibernation required; colonies grow year-round under consistent warmth. Brood develops egg to adult in approximately 4–8 weeks depending on temperature. Replete workers appear as the colony matures and has surplus nutrition — their presence signals the colony is healthy and well-fed. Colony size at maturity can reach several hundred to over a thousand workers under optimal conditions.

## COMMON CHALLENGES

Problem	Likely Cause	Fix
Repletes injured	Vibration or nest disturbance	Move to stable, low-traffic location; minimize opening
Growth stalled	Temperature too low	Add heat; target 85–90°F in nest
Colony weakening	Sugar supply interrupted	Replenish immediately; keep sugars constant
Repletes deflating	Sugar deprivation or colony stress	Increase sugar frequency; reduce disturbance
Mold in outworld	Protein left too long or humidity too high	Remove food within 48 hrs; improve ventilation
Queen not laying	Heat or hydration stress	Check temp gradient; leave undisturbed