

2017

13 June 2017, Tuesday

I obtained this small colony of *Myrmica rubra*, a red stinging ant found throughout Europe, including the UK, from Ants Kalytta via a friend. The colony consists of one queen and about 50-60 workers, with a few larvae present. Currently they reside in a test tube which I have placed open, into a small outworld. Attached to the outworld is a horizontal acrylic ant farm I brought from Antstore last year. So far, I have tried this acrylic ant farm with three different species of ant, and none of them like it, including these rubras. I am not sure why they don't like it but I will keep trying.

The ants settled in very quickly into their new home and seem happy. They have been eating flies, cockroach and protein jelly. I am going to do an over-feeding challenge with this colony, which is something my friend Dermv used to do with his dermestids colonies. Should be interesting.

18 June 2017, Sunday

These ants have settled in well, but have not moved out of their test tube, despite having the acrylic ant farm attached to it. They have explored it in few numbers, but so far don't seem to like it. The queen looks healthy and remains in the test tube, near the cotton wool wick at the far end of the tube. They have eaten everything I have given them, leaving little leftovers. I have noticed some of them wrestling with each other. Ants don't usually attack their own, but perhaps this is some hierarchy behaviour amongst the workers.

22 June 2017, Thursday

This colony appears to have abandoned their test tube for a corner of the foraging box, near the water bowl, though the queen, brood and a few workers remain in the test tube. I have ordered a large ant farm set up, which should arrive tomorrow to transfer this colony into. I am giving up on the acrylic horizontal farm. None of my ant colonies seem to like them.

23 June 2017, Friday

KK, seeing as these ants are ignoring the horizontal acrylic ant farm, I have attached their foraging box to a new glass ant farm (Starter Kit C), which I filled with damp sandy loam. I have covered it up with a dark cloth and left them to it. This was about two hours ago, and a couple of workers are exploring it already. Be interesting to see what they think of it.

19 August 2017, Saturday

These ants do not seem to eat much of what I give them, unless it's those large bluebottle houseflies; those they attack and demolish. Kept having a problem with escapes but found a tiny gap under the lid of the nesting box. I sealed it with Sellotape and that appears to have fixed the problem. A small number of dead ants have been placed in the foraging box, but these are very dark in colour, indicating old age. The queen has been spotted a few times emerging from the nest to examine a food source, but she is often taken back into the nest by the workers. Some brood can be seen in the nest, thanks to the large tunnels and chambers this species build.

1 September 2017, Friday

Lots of new callows born over the past few weeks, and lots of brood present in the nest. The queen still emerges from the nest when food is found, though she doesn't always leave the tube linking the foraging and nesting boxes. Sometimes she'll run to the entrance to the outside world, and then run back again. I didn't know it but this colony produced some winged males, or at least one. I didn't realise this until I

found one worker carrying a dead one about in the nesting box. I can't see any more in the nest.

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