



Formicarium Setup

A formicarium (terrarium for ants) consists of a nest area and an arena area where the ants can walk around. There are many ways to arrange a formicarium.

The most common arrangements are:

- 1.) Farm and arena
- 2.) Farm without the basin
- 3.) Basin



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Function:

The farm is used as the nest area. As the glass discs are very close to each other you can observe the ants digging tunnels and chambers into the sand.

The arena area is used for runout and as a food and waste chamber.

Ants have the habit to carry the waste (rest of the food, excrements and dead ants) as far away from the nest area as possible. That way the farm is kept clean and you can find a pile of waste in one corner of the basin where you can take it out easily.

The food can be exchanged there easily, too.

Location:

A formicarium should never be located on a vibrating underground, on top of technical devices or in front of a window, because the animals want to keep their nest in the dark and in summer time the formicarium can overheat (heat build-up) rapidly. To give them a subsurface feeling you can use a red or black film to cover the nest area. As a heat and light source you can locate a lamp with a not so high wattage above the arena.

Filling up the farm:

To avoid stagnant moisture and rottenness you should put a 1-2 cm layer of water storing and air permeable granulate into the farm at first.

You can use a lot of different materials such as clay granulate, Seramis, pumice, lava etc...

On top of the granulate you can put a mixture of sand and loam which has to be diggable for the ants. Fill the farm with that sand-loam-mix until $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{2}{3}$ of the farm is filled.

Note that you don't press the bottom ground into the farm because the ants have to be able to carry out the sand when they dig inside. Therefore you never fill the complete farm with bottom ground.

After the farm has been filled you have to moisten the whole farm so the bottom ground doesn't stay dusty and the sand-loam mix gets the right consistency.

Tip: To moisten the sand with water you can roll a piece of paper or use a coffee filter where you cut off the bottom as a feed hopper.

Filling up the arena:

The arena doesn't need any bottom ground. It is only used for decoration purposes of the arrangement. As bottom ground you should use a material (sand-loam or pure loam) that is not diggable for the ants and only a few millimeters thick. You have to moisten it well and let it dry so the ants will not dig into it.

Tip: To dry the bottom ground you should leave the arena open and put it near a heater or a blow dryer.

Note: Too extreme temperature fluctuations can cause the glass to burst or the acrylic glass to lose its shape!

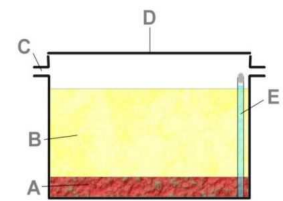
Watering:

when you fill up the farm it could happen that the water cannot pass through the loam layer so well. You can do the following to prevent that:

put a drainage tube vertical into the bottom but make sure to seal it with cotton or a sponge before you fill in the bottom ground.

Or fill up the farm on one side from the edge to the surface with granulate so the water can get to the bottom easily through that area.

Picture info: A - Granulate, B - Sand/loam, C - Connection, D - Lid, E - Drainage



Breakout prevention:

If you have very small ants you should use a sealing tape with the lid. To prevent the animals from escaping as soon as you open the formicarium you can use paraffin oil, talkum powder or PTFE at the top edge of the formicarium.



Decoration:

Natural decoration (stones, wood, ground or plants) that have been collected outside should be treated with boiling water or in the oven or microwave before you put them into the arrangement to kill fungal spores and parasites.



Connection:

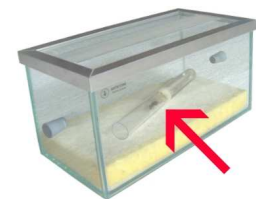
Our starter sets are modular extendable. As the colony is getting bigger you can connect new basins through flexible tubes and pipes.



Inserting the animals:

You should insert the animals when the sand-loam mixture is not wet anymore but still humid and the bottom ground within the arena has hardened. That should be after 1 or 2 days after filling it, depending on the amount of water that has been used.

You should put the transportation tube with the animals into the arena. If that is not possible you can also connect it to the farm or arena so the animals can move out. (For more details please check also Instructions for ants)



Food / trough:

Please make sure that you use a small cup or something similar for the food so it has no direct contact with the bottom ground. That is how you can prevent the bottom ground from molding. Inside of the small cups and troughs for water you should put small stones or a sponge to prevent the ants from drowning.



Good luck and have much fun!

Your Antstore team