

LASIUS NIGER (2) COLONY JOURNAL

9 September 2007

I brought this colony from Antstore after believing my other *Lasius niger* colony had died out after I saw what look suspiciously like a segment of *Lasius niger* queen abdomen on the surface of the soil. I removed the soil where I believed them to have nested, but there was no sign of any ants. However, before they arrived I noticed, when looking at my *Temnothorax nylander*, housed in the same tank, that a small *Lasius niger* worker was in the tank, feeding from a fly. Interesting! I wonder where it came from, and, if there is still a colony in the tank.

So I have placed this new colony in a spare Antstore Starter Kit I had. They seemed to have settled in nicely and have tunnelled into the sand of the nesting box.

6 October 2007

Oddly enough this colony has not dug into the sand and created a 'normal' subterranean nest, but have decided, at least for the moment, to live on the surface of the sand. Interestingly though, the workers have built a 360 degree wall of sand around the queen, who seems quite at home in the sunlight. When I looked in on them yesterday, I noticed that a pile of brood of all stages has been placed in the corner of the tank, again on the surface. The position that this particular colony's tank is situated may have something to do with this. Their tank is onto top of an old cabinet inside my ant shed and is almost touching the roof of the shed. My garden is south facing and so receives a lot of sunlight, which causes the roof of the shed to become very warm, and obviously this heat radiates down onto the ant tank. I guess as the winter settles in they may well dig in, in preparation for hibernation. They have not yet, as far as I am aware foraged in the foraging tank yet.

22 October 2007

These ants are still living on the surface despite the fact that the ambient temperature has dropped to as low as 4 or 5 degrees now, causing the ants on the surface to become inactive. I guess they plan to hibernate on top of the sand this year. I can just see the top of the queen's thorax over the edge of the wall of sand built around her by the workers.