

AGES 6 AND UP

1440

1447

Uncle Milton's
Ant Farm
Gel Colony[®]
live ant habitat



**Uncle
Milton**

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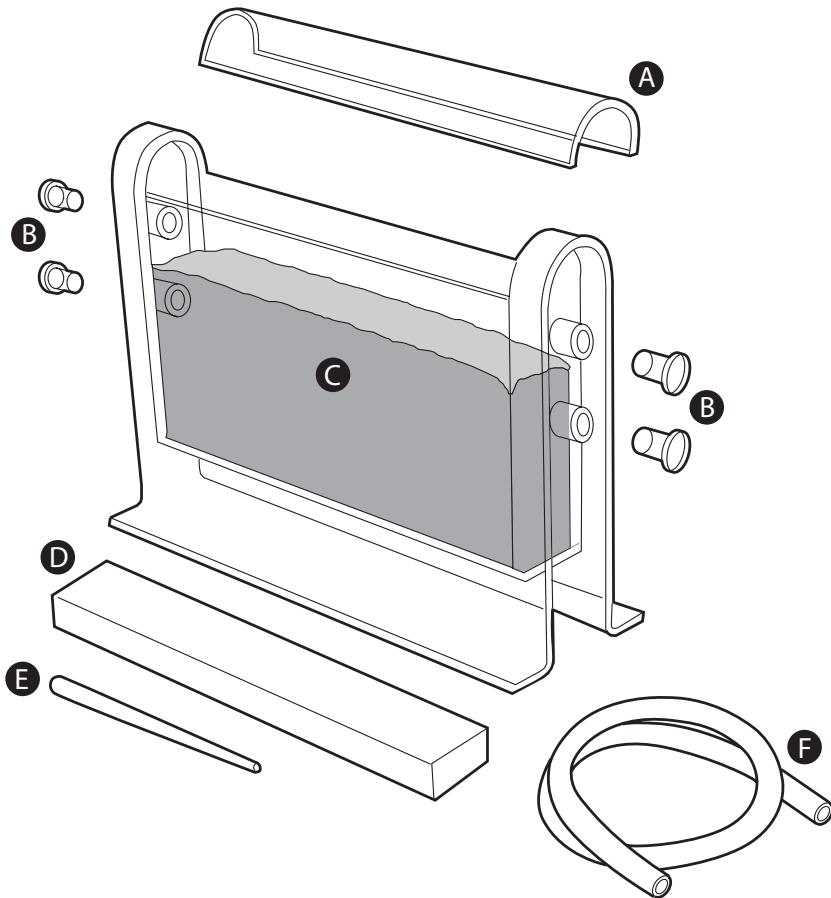
Patent Pending. Printed in China.

Ant Watcher's Manual

KEEP THESE INSTRUCTIONS FOR FUTURE REFERENCE - DO NOT DISCARD

Problems? Before taking this product back to the store please call us, we can help!

1-888-742-2484 or go to www.unclemilton.com



A. Habitat lid

B. Antport plugs (4)

C. Ant gel

D. Light Module (included in item 1449)

E. Tunnel starter tool

F. Antway tube

Enjoy the view

Uncle Milton's Ant Farm Gel Colony is a sleek habitat that provides an ultra-cool 3-D view of your ants' world. The translucent gel provides an excellent living environment for ants. Watch them tunnel and skillfully designed passageways right before your eyes.

It's all in the gel

The Ant Farm Gel Colony gel is specially formulated to provide all the necessary nutrients and moisture for your ants. There is no need to add water or food to the habitat.

Please note: The Ant Farm Gel Colony gel is non-toxic, but is NOT for human consumption.

Optional light module (included with model 1449): Using a small Phillips-head screwdriver, remove battery compartment cover from bottom of light module. Insert two fresh "AA" alkaline batteries, making sure the "+" and "-" ends are inserted correctly, as indicated in battery compartment. Replace battery compartment cover (do not over-tighten screws). Insert light module into habitat base, making sure it is centered and snug. On/Off switch is located on bottom of light module. (Note: Do not keep light on for long periods of time, as this will quickly drain the batteries. Also, ants need to have some darkness.)

How to receive your ants

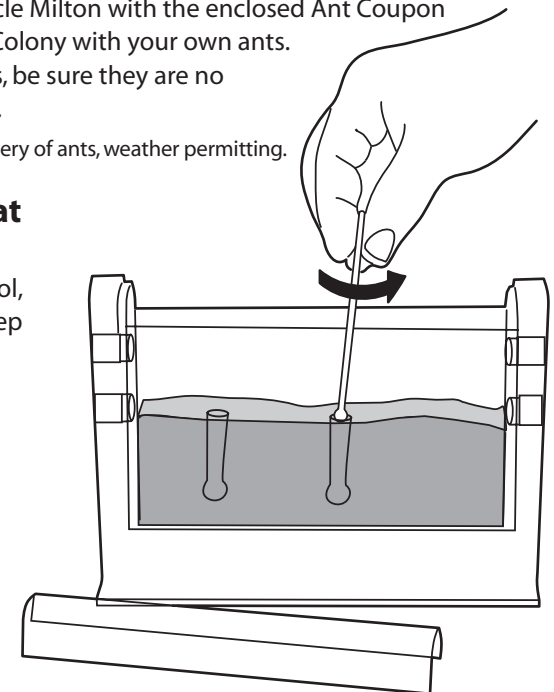
Order ants directly from Uncle Milton with the enclosed Ant Coupon or stock your Ant Farm Gel Colony with your own ants.

If you gather your own ants, be sure they are no smaller than 1/4 inch in size.

Please allow 3 to 6 weeks for delivery of ants, weather permitting.

Preparing the habitat

- 1) Remove the habitat lid.
- 2) With the tunnel starter tool, make three (3) 2 1/2" inch-deep holes, spaced equally apart, into the gel. With the tunnel starter tool at the bottom of the hole, swirl the tool to enlarge the hole.

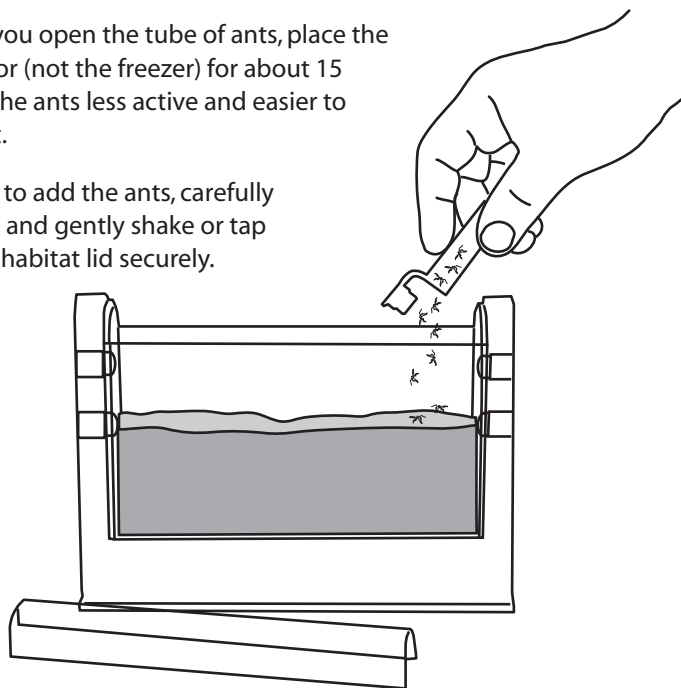


To populate your Ant Farm Gel Colony

1) You'll receive 25 to 30 non-breeding adult Harvester worker ants.

2) Important: Before you open the tube of ants, place the tube in the refrigerator (not the freezer) for about 15 minutes. This makes the ants less active and easier to place into the habitat.

3) When you're ready to add the ants, carefully open the plastic tube and gently shake or tap them in. Replace the habitat lid securely.



On average, ants will live 1 to 3 months in the gel. Before you refill your Ant Farm Gel Colony with new ants, remember to remove any old ants (alive or dead). You should never mix ants from different colonies. The new ants will explore existing tunnels and work the colony. You do not need to add new gel.

For the first few hours, your ants may appear "lazy." Don't worry, they are getting used to their new surroundings. Place your Ant Farm Gel Colony in a dark, quiet place overnight on the first night. This will help your ants become better adjusted to their new home. Ants are very adaptable and soon you'll see them start to tunnel.

Be kind to your ants

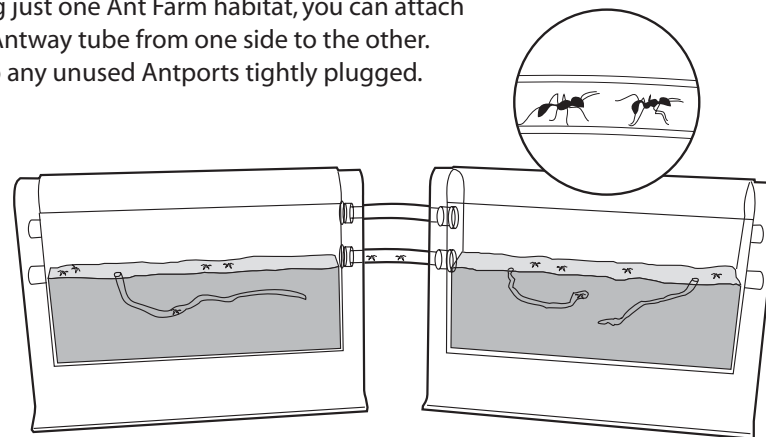
Ants work hard pains building their little world, and if they are disturbed too much they will die. Place the habitat on a sturdy shelf or table that won't get bumped or shaken. Keep your ants away from direct sunlight or sources of extreme cold or heat.

Note: Never touch ants directly. They can bite or sting to defend themselves. If you're allergic to insect bites, you may get an allergic reaction that could require immediate medical attention.

Get connected

Ant Farm brand habitats can be connected to each other! You can use just one Ant Farm habitat, or you can build an entire village!

To connect, cut Antway tube to desired length and attach end tightly onto an open Antport. Attach other end onto an Antport of another Ant Farm habitat. If using just one Ant Farm habitat, you can attach the Antway tube from one side to the other. Keep any unused Antports tightly plugged.



Connect the Antways

Fun ant facts

Everyone knows that ants are insects and that they can sometimes be found marching around picnics. The world of ants is fascinating and quite remarkable. There are probably lots of interesting facts about ants that you don't know.

Did you know that ants have been around for 150 million years? There are over 10,000 different species of ants. At any given time, there are ten thousand trillion ants alive on Earth. They can be found almost anywhere on the planet - from the Arctic Circle to the tip of South America.

Ants are speedy creatures. If you could run as fast as they do for their size, you'd be running as fast as a racehorse. They're also very strong and can carry twenty times their own body weight. They work in teams to carry extra-heavy objects.

Up close and personal

An ant's body is divided up into three sections: head, thorax and abdomen. If you look at one closely, you can easily see all three parts. Its square-like head consists of jaws, eyes and antennae. Its jaws are very strong and open and close like a pair of scissors. Its two eyes are made up of many tiny lenses. Its antennae are used to smell, touch, taste and hear. An ant doesn't have lungs; oxygen enters through tiny holes located all over its body and carbon dioxide leaves through those holes.

An ant has two stomachs - one to hold its own food and one to hold food that the ant shares with the rest of the colony. That may not sound too appetizing, but this is one of the many ways ants provide for one another. An ant's entire body is covered with a hard outer covering called the exoskeleton. Some species of ants contain stingers in the tip of their abdomen, used to defend themselves.

Excellent communication skills

Ants communicate well. In fact, if you watch them long enough, you'll see that they communicate with other ants by touching each other with their antennae. They can also communicate with sound in the form of vibrations moving through the ground. But ants mostly communicate by smell. Chemicals called pheromones. This enables them to leave scent trails that other ants can follow. Ants secrete several pheromones, and each pheromone cause a different behavior. Every colony has its own odor, creating an "intruder alert" signal when unwelcome visitors have invaded.

Organization of the colony

Ants are social animals and live in very organized colonies. Although there can be tens of thousands of ants in a single colony, the colony runs a tight ship with three main job duties - the queen, workers and males.

The Queen - The queen starts out her life with wings. She flies while mating then finds a nesting area. She then lays eggs for the rest of her life, while worker ants care for the eggs. A queen can live more than fifteen years.

Worker Ants - Worker ants are non-mating female ants who are the daughters of the queen. Their job is to do just about everything. They hunt and gather food, take out the trash, feed other members of the colony, take care of the queen's eggs, design the nest, build the nest, and defend the colony against invaders. If a worker ant finds a good source of food, it leaves a scent trail so that others in the colony will stop what they're doing and find the food too. The vast majority of the ants in a colony are worker ants.

Some workers are soldiers. They are larger in size than other workers. Their main purpose is to defend the colony. Sometimes they go to other colonies and take slaves. Some species of Harvester ants, whose specialty is collecting and storing seeds, have soldiers that do nothing but crack the seeds for the other ants to eat.

Males - Males come from unfertilized eggs. Both queens and workers can produce males. Males fly from the colony to mate with queens and then they die soon after.

The circle of life

The life cycle of an ant consists of four stages: egg, larva, pupa and adult. The larvae look like tiny worms and although they have no eyes or legs, they can eat food that is brought to them by the worker ants.

The larvae shed their skin as they grow and eventually spin a silk-like cocoon from a substance that they secrete. Then they become pupae the last stage before adulthood. At the end of this stage, the ant has grown to its full size. The lifespan of a worker ant is about one year.

Harvester ants

There are 22 species of Harvester ants in the United States. You'll receive adult Western Harvester ants if you send away for ants with the mail-in coupon. Federal agriculture laws do not permit the shipment of queen ants.

Harvester ants are ground dwellers. They build medium to large sized ant mounds. Western Harvester ant mounds measure 1 to 4 feet across and 2 to 10 inches high. They tend to remove all the plants that surround the mound because they don't like a lot of shade. They also cover their mounds with pebbles or leaves to keep their nests warm. Sometimes they move their colony if they run into trouble with other ants or if the ant mound gets too much shade.

Harvester ants can tunnel 15 feet down to create chambers. The chambers are used for nurseries, food storage and rest stops for the workers. Harvesters are known to be very active. They leave the nest one by one, going in all directions. Harvester ants are great at foraging for food. Their specialty is harvesting and storing wild grass seeds that they take back to the nest for future use.