

ANT LIFE CYCLE

LASIUS NIGER



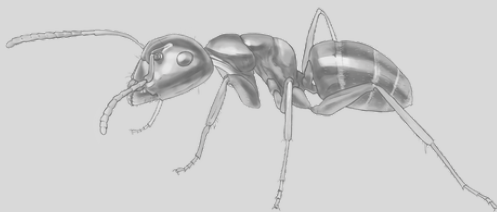
The life cycle of an ant begins with the egg laid by the queen. These eggs are tiny, oval and usually whitish-transparent. They are carefully cared for by workers and laid in special brood chambers, where optimal conditions in terms of temperature and humidity prevail. Depending on the species and the size of the colony, eggs are sometimes eaten by the queen or other workers.



The eggs hatch into footless, white larvae that resemble maggots in appearance. They are completely dependent on the care of the workers, who feed them intensively, clean them and move them regularly within the nest to ensure the best possible development conditions.



At the end of the larval stage, the larvae pupate. In the pupal stage, the larvae transform into adult ants. In some species this takes place in a cocoon, in others openly without a cocoon ("naked pupae"). During this time, they do not feed and are still dependent on the workers, who constantly care for the pupae and protect them from predators.



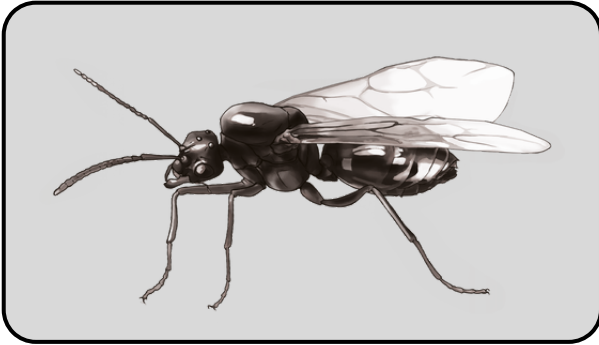
Eventually, the pupae hatch into adult ants, which are initially light-colored and soft, but soon acquire their final color and firmness. Their tasks now depend on the respective caste: Workers take over care, foraging and defense, queens found new colonies, and males serve exclusively for reproduction and die soon after mating. The cycle then begins again.



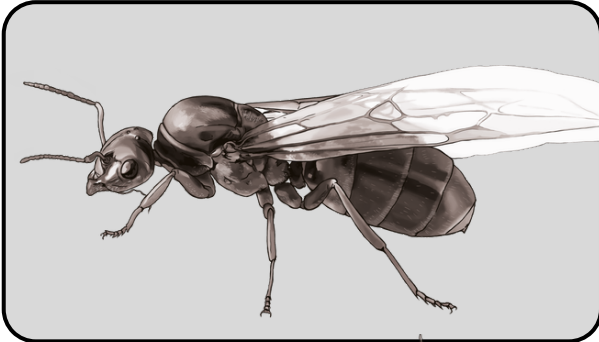
In an ant colony, workers are usually infertile females who do not lay eggs themselves, but play a crucial role in reproduction. Through intensive care, they ensure that eggs, larvae and pupae have optimal conditions for development. Workers not only feed and protect the brood, but also the queen and regulate the nest climate. By rearing young queens and drones, they enable them to successfully participate in the nuptial flight and thus found new colonies. Without the careful care and nurturing of workers, successful reproduction and the survival of the entire ant colony would not be possible.

ANT LIFE CYCLE

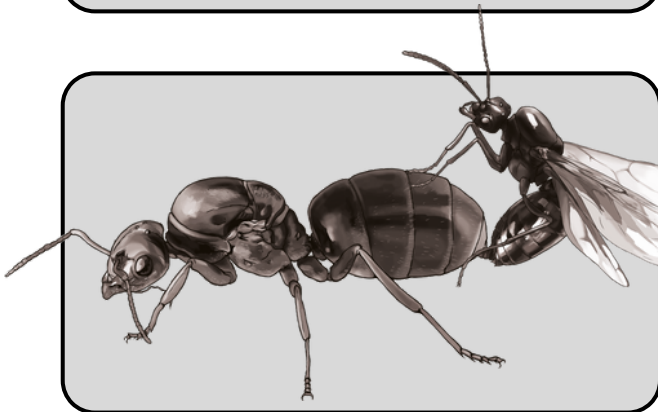
LASIUS NIGER



Drones are male ants whose only task is to mate with young queens. They usually emerge seasonally and have wings to find suitable mating partners during the swarm flight. After successful mating, the drones usually die within a short time. In contrast to workers, they do not perform any tasks in the nest, such as care or foraging, but are used exclusively for genetic reproduction and thus ensure the continued existence of the ant species.



Young queens are female ants that, as future queens, have the task of founding new colonies. They develop from special larvae that are fed and cared for particularly intensively. After reaching sexual maturity, they take part in the nuptial flight, during which they are fertilized by drones. They then shed their wings and look for a suitable place to found a new colony. They lay eggs and initially raise the first generation of workers alone. As soon as these workers have hatched, they take over further care and provisioning.



The nuptial flight is a central event in the life cycle of ants, during which sexually mature young queens and drones take to the air in large numbers for the purpose of mating. This flight usually takes place synchronously in warm, humid weather. During the mating flight, the young queens mate with several males in order to store enough sperm for their entire lives. After mating, the drones die while the young queens shed their wings and set off in search of suitable places to found new colonies. This flight is crucial for genetic mixing and the spread of ant species.