

Ant Jelly Recipes

This recipe is from Bert Holldobler and Edward O. Wilson

To feed ants in the laboratory, we employ the Bhatkar diet (named after its inventor, Awinash Bhatkar), which is prepared as follows:

1 x egg

62 ml honey

1 gm vitamins

1 gm minerals and salts

5 gm agar agar

500 ml water

Dissolve the agar in 250 ml boiling water. Let cool. With an egg beater mix 250 ml water, honey, vitamins, minerals, and the egg until smooth. Add to this mixture, stirring constantly, the agar solution.

Pour into petri dishes (0.5-1 cm deep) to set. Store in the refrigerator.

The recipe fills four 15-cm-diameter petri dishes, and is jellylike in consistency.

Most insectivorous ant species thrive on this diet when fed it three times weekly along with fragments of freshly killed insects, such as mealworms (*Tenebrio*), cockroaches (*Nauphoeta*), and crickets, offered in small quantities.

If the ants are also predators, they do especially well when allowed access to bottles containing fruit flies, preferably flightless mutants. Alternatively, the fruit-fly adults can be frozen and sprinkled onto the foraging arenas for the ants to discover.

Ants South Africa Ant Jelly Recipe

The Ant Jelly on the Ants South Africa website does not contain any egg.

Our preparation is as follows:

½ teaspoon Agar Agar

½ gram of amino acid

½ gram of sea salt

½ gram of vitamins

2 Tablespoons of honey

2 Tablespoons of Sugar. The sugars that we use have fructose, Sucrose and Dextrose. But you can use normal table sugar.

For the Strawberry flavor we add 3ml organic strawberry syrup and 3ml pink food coloring

For the Honey flavor we add 1 extra tablespoon of Honey. Now the coloring of the honey will be different, depending on the Honey you buy. We source ours from a local bee keeper and his bees forage on local flowers, so the color varies all the time.

(We need to stress this, when buying honey, make sure it is pure honey and has no alternative sweeteners. Using any sweeteners will be detrimental to your ants.)

1 cup of water, we use distilled water.

How to prepare:

Mix everything together in a small pot on the stove, heat gently, until everything is dissolved. Watch your pot carefully, if you let it boil, it will probably boil over.

Before boiling point, remove from the stove and let it cool for about 5 minutes, then pour into your desired container. Once cooled the jelly will set and you can refrigerate.

Tips:

If you use 1 whole teaspoon of Agar Agar per 250ml cup, it will still be Jelly, but much, much firmer. The less Agar Agar you use, the softer the jelly will be.

Be very precise in your measurements, use proper measuring tools.

How to adapt your recipe for different species.

Following the base of the recipes above, you can add different ingredients to the Agar Agar and the results will be the same, it will still form a Jelly.

You may add your proteins from crickets, cockroaches, meal worms, or egg, this is especially helpful when you have a newly arrived queen and need to give her a good feeding.

Crush up their proteins into a paste and add it to your pot.

You may leave out the sugars and honey for the species that do not enjoy it. Some species prefer the added proteins. Each colony will be different. We have two colonies of droptails and they have different likes when it comes to their jelly.

You need to experiment and see what your colony prefers.