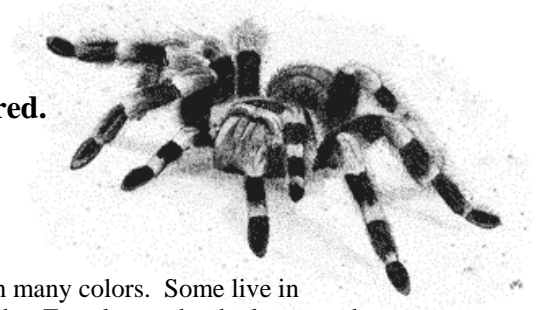


Petware House

Your Neighborhood Pet Store

Tarantula

Theraphosida, includes pink toed, red knee, and rose haired.



CARE SHEET

Tarantulas are members of the spider family. There are over 800 kinds in many colors. Some live in wet jungles, others in deserts. They have eight eyes, and are active at night. Females tend to be larger and live longer than the males do.

Average Size The average size of common Tarantula's is 2 to 10 inches in length.

Life span 5+ years with proper care.

Feeding Use appropriate size live feeder insects, such as gut-loaded (recently fed) crickets, mealworms, super worms, roaches; may eat frozen pinkie mice, warmed to room temperature.

Feed juveniles several times a week, adults once a week. Be sure that the food is smaller than the tarantula; Pink-toe tarantulas eat small crickets; remove any uneaten live food as it may bite the legs of a resting tarantula and cause injury.

Housing First you need a plastic or glass aquarium, about three times the leg-span long and two times the leg-span wide of the tarantula. The height of the aquarium should be the length of the tarantula for ground dwellers and about ten inches for tree-dwelling tarantulas; the tank should have a secure lid with adequate ventilation.

Provide a place to hide, such as several pieces of bark propped together; tree dwelling tarantulas also need twigs and branches to build their webs.

Substrate – Use Mulch-type commercial material; unbleached paper towels, soil, dampened sphagnum moss, and bark; avoid gravel and artificial turf (too harsh for skin)

Maintenance Use a fine mesh net or cup to remove the tarantula during maintenance. Fill the water bowl daily. Spray mist the habitat as needed to keep the habitat moist. No special cleaning required.

Temps Temperature should range from 72 degrees F. to 82 degrees F., Place heating strips or pads under the habitat also.

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- Humidity** Spray-mist the habitat as needed to keep the habitat moist; tarantulas need the correct humidity to stay healthy, dehydration can be fatal.
- Lighting** Keep in a darker part of the room away from sunlight; avoid incandescent lights which can dry out a tarantula; use a black or infrared light to watch your tarantula after dark.

WATER & ACCESSORIES

Always have a shallow dish of fresh, filtered, chlorine-free water available; place a stone in the dish to keep the tarantula and crickets from drowning.

BASIC REPRODUCTIVE INFORMATION

Courtship involves cautious approach by the male, who touches the female with his front legs, then moves in a way that identifies both his gender and species. If the female is receptive to his tentative advances, she abandons her burrow and ultimately postures with her cephalothorax raised. She remains inactive while the male approaches her from the front. He uses special hooks on the first pair of his walking legs to hold the female's fang-bearing chelicerae during insemination. After the sperm have been deposited in the female's abdominal genital opening, the male disengages his hooks and departs briskly.

After mating, females tunnel under large stones and spin a large sheet on which they lay their eggs. A second sheet of silk covers the first and contains the eggs in a loose bag. Females remain with their eggs for 6–7 weeks until they hatch. The young **spiderlings** remain in the burrow with their mother for days or weeks, eventually dispersing a short distance from their birthplace to take up residence in individual tiny burrows. As with all spiders, young tarantulas experience tremendous mortality. On average, each female produces only two spiderlings that survive to reproduce. Male tarantulas usually live only one year after the definitive molt, but females have the potential to live for many years after becoming sexually mature.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Handling tarantulas is not recommended; if feeling threatened, they may bite, or run and fall; even a short fall can cause a serious, even fatal injury. Their bite is equivalent to a bee sting but is still painful and some individuals may be especially sensitive; if bitten, seek medical attention immediately.

As part of their natural defense the hairs on some tarantulas can be “flicked”, these hairs may also cause allergic reactions or irritation. They are solitary; keep only one to a cage.

When tarantulas molt, they lie on their back with their feet up in the air; juveniles molt about four times a year and adults once a year; they may stop eating up to two weeks before a molt; do not disturb during this time; be sure to remove all live food from enclosure as even a cricket could harm them during this period.

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