

 15-25 years

 1-4 in.

 Intermediate

 68-75 degrees

 Insects



While tarantulas are known to be one of the creepiest and weirdest animal species; tarantulas can become a wonderful pet option. Aside from popular opinion, tarantulas are interesting, calm, beautiful animals, and can thrive for years in a stunning terrarium in your home. These guidelines are the basic necessities for your new pet. Please do your research and consult your veterinarian for further guidance.

#### TANK SET UP

When setting up the habitat for your new tarantula, the 4 most important items you must consider are; safety, heating, size, and security. Tarantulas are notorious for being escape artists, so a 5 to 10-gallon aquarium with a locking screen lid is a great option. Another option, is a glass front locking terrarium with a screen top.

**NEVER HOUSE TARANTULAS TOGETHER.** They are carnivorous.

#### SUBSTRATE

When designing the enclosure, terrestrial (ground dwelling) tarantulas need more ground space and a deeper substrate, where arboreal (tree dwelling) tarantulas need taller enclosures with cork or branches for climbing. EcoEarth or coconut husk bedding is a good substrate for tarantulas. With the burrowing species, you will need to have a deeper ground.

#### TEMPERATURE

Most tarantulas can be kept in the temperature range of 68 – 75 degrees F., which is close to room temperature in most homes. If your room is cooler, an under-tank heater will be needed, placed on the back of the terrarium, not underneath.

Some tropical species require a temperature in the upper 70's during the day hours, but no higher. Warmer temps during the day, and a temperature drop at night, is ideal.

#### HUMIDITY

Most tarantula species need humidity between 55% - 70%. More often than not, a slightly lower humidity level is better than too high, (omit of humidity)as that can lead to mold and mildew in your terrarium. Using the proper substrate and lightly misting the habitat will keep the humidity at a constant level. Keep a small water dish in the terrarium, but not too deep.

#### FEEDING

Feed your tarantula the amount of insect it will eat in one feeding, once a week. Two crickets is all that should be offered at one time. If the tarantula does not eat all the crickets, the crickets could very well feed on the tarantula. Never leave uneaten insects in the cage. **DO NOT PUT CALCIUM** on the crickets fed to your tarantula; rather feed gut loaded insects. You may also try dubia roaches and mealworms.

## MOLTING

Tarantulas are very fragile while molting. Remove all uneaten insects and avoid handling. Make certain to keep humidity at the acceptable level. Tarantulas will exhibit several signs of molting, before the actual molt...they will eb, stop eating, stop moving, and sometimes lay on their back... **THE TARANTULA IS NOT DEAD**. Leave it along, and wait for the molting process to finish. **Normally if a tarantula has died, it will remain on its stomach, and curl the legs under; not be on its back.**

## ACCESSORIES

Small branches, cork for climbing, artificial and live plants safe for your tarantula, and a hide in the substrate for some terrestrial species are great additions to the terrarium.

## HANDLING

Some tarantulas are meant to be enjoyed by observation and care, and some are more handle-able. Tarantulas do have venom that has typically the same effect as a bee sting; please do not handle your tarantula until you know what you are doing. Never handle a tarantula if you are allergic to bee stings.

## CLEANING

Tarantulas are very clean animals. Do not disturb their webbing or their feeding cocoons in their habitats, rather clean out their tanks once every 4-6 months. Transfer your tarantula to a holding container, empty habitat thoroughly, clean all, then replace with new substrate, clean dishes, and clean accessories. This is very stressful to your tarantula, and as they are very clean animals, should only be done as needed.