

Mantis Hatchlings (*Tenodera aridifolia sinensis*)

CARE INSTRUCTIONS

Kit Includes:

- 3 hatchling praying mantis (also called nymphs)
- 3 16 oz vials to house each mantis
- 1 container of flightless fruit flies for feeding them

Things You Will Need:

- A spray bottle to mist your mantis
- decorations such as sticks for the enclosures

When They Arrive:

Your mantis had some things to help them travel: damp paper towel and some excelsior to walk on. You can keep or discard these items.

Decorate the houses: decorate your 32 oz mini enclosures (the deli cups with the fabric lids) with a few sticks or something like that. Make sure the sticks are not moldy or wet: dry, clean wood works best. You can get fancy: you could add some soil at the bottom, or dried leaves. The mantis need things to walk on and somewhere to hang upside down to shed their skins as they grow. **DO NOT** add cedar of any type, or any materials that will be too moldy, dirty, or are potentially contaminated with things like pesticides, herbicides, or fertilizers: stay away from materials that come from a roadside where fumes will be an issue. Be careful with your babies: they are very fragile.

Water your mantis: Mist the inside of the container a bit, especially on the walls: they don't need much, just a handful droplets, so don't get it soaked in there (it does not dry out well).

Feed your mantis: Tap the fruit fly container on surface so that all the flies fall to the bottom. They can't fly, but are fast walkers! Get the lid loose on the mantis container. Then, tapping continuously, tip the fly container over tip of the mantis house and tap a few out, so that a few flies fall into the mantis house: you don't need many. Keep tapping so the flies don't walk all over. Replace the fly lid quickly, and close the mantis lid. Each mantis will only eat a couple flies per day when very small, and as they grow, a good ballpark per feeding is about 30% of their body size at each feeding.

- You will need to feed and water your mantis every 1-2 days, or as you see the mantis run out of flies.
- Do not feed all your flies out. If there are no adult flies in the fly culture, there will be no females to lay new eggs. The life cycle of a fruit fly is only about 10 days, so numbers increase significantly once you have had the culture for at least 10 days: but adults are necessary to continue the culture.
- If you accidentally added too many flies to the mantis container, return them to the fly container after a day or so. Flies trapped in a container without food and a place to lay eggs typically perish, and are of no help to the survival of the fly culture.

General Care:

- Keep the mantis container out of direct sunlight, but someplace warm: same with the flies.
- A mantis will eat 30% its body weight at every feeding. They won't drink out of bowls, so misting is important.
- As your mantis grows, it will always need a house at least four times its own body length in height and width: and bigger is ALWAYS better. This means they will grow out of the provided containers. At that point, you could move them into critter keepers or an aquarium. Always add something for your mantis to climb on and hang upside down from.
- Your mantis are at a size where if you house them together, they will eat each other.
- You will begin to see molted "skins" as your mantis sheds regularly to reach adulthood. They hang upside down to do this, and wiggle out, leaving behind a crispy little husk. It's pretty neat if you can catch it 😊
- The natural lifespan of a mantis is about 6-8 months, and they will reach nearly 4 inches in length, growing wings once they reach their final "instar" (aka molt).

Flies:

This fly culture will last about a month before they run out of food. By that time, your mantis will probably be too big to keep eating flies anyways, at which point you will need to source your own food items. Moths, bait maggots, and crickets are all generally available from widespread sources such as pet stores. We've heard of people catching bugs for food: this is risky, as wild bugs might be exposed to pesticides. Whatever you use, it needs to be alive: mantis need live prey.

Praying Mantis for Education:

Mantis make an interesting addition to any setting and are very fun to observe and report on. You will notice them watching food items, and watching you too! They are slow growing so you have plenty of time to observe and work with them. The more you interact with them, the more tame they become. The mantis we sell are approved for agricultural use in Canada, though they are not native. This is a popular species for use as pest control in greenhouses.

We guarantee live shipping: however, once the mantis arrive, be ready to take care of them. These are living creatures and have needs of their own you'll have to meet. We can't control what happens past the point of shipping, but we can help you on your mantis adventure: should you encounter any problems with your mantis, call us right away so that we can help you out!

Butterfly Wings N' Wishes respectfully acknowledges that we operate on Treaty 6 territory, a traditional gathering place for diverse Indigenous peoples whose histories, languages, and cultures continue to influence our business, our way of life, and our community.

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