

Mantis Ootheca (*Tenodera aridifolia sinensis*)

CARE INSTRUCTIONS

Kit Includes:

-1 praying mantis ootheca (egg case)

Things You Will Need:

- food for your mantis (flightless fruit flies work well)
- A spray bottle with misting capabilities
- Somewhere to hatch the egg case and house resulting adults



Be aware that the mantis ootheca are highly unpredictable, and can take 2-10 weeks to hatch. Although success rates are very high, it is possible that some egg cases (around 5%) are infertile. There is no way for us to predict this as the female mantis will lay an ootheca regardless of fertilization.

When They Arrive: To **hatch the egg case**, hang it inside a net house by threading a needle or pin through the top surface of the ootheca (usually has a stick or cylindrical depression in it) and affixing it to the upper corner or wall of the enclosure. Other habitats may be used, provided there are ample climbing surfaces - and they may struggle with glass or plastic. Get ready to use your misting bottle daily: humidity is critical. Keep your egg case away from anything dangerous for bugs, including cedar wood and chemical cleaners, sprays, or essential oils. Mist daily; multiple times a day if possible.

When they Hatch: You can end up with anywhere from 50-400 mantis hatching out per ootheca, with an average of 150. They will all emerge simultaneously, pouring out like a little waterfall, in a very short window of time (under an hour). Upon emergence, their bodies will be very thin and threadlike. It may take a day or so for them to be ready to eat, but following that they must be fed and watered every day. A mantis can often eat a third of its body weight, or even more, each day or two. *Do not handle your mantis: they are very delicate!*

For the first couple weeks of life, they can be housed communally. Once they're about an inch long (they grow unpredictably: this could be 3 weeks, or it could be 4) you may have to get creative in housing them separately, because they will begin to eat each other. Prior to this point you may see occasional cannibalism, but at about an inch in length it gets serious. For individual housing, we have seen people use a large deli cup, mason jars with a mesh top, small critter keepers, or other things. As your mantis grows, it will always need a house at least four times its own body length in height and width. Always add something for your mantis to climb on. If you continue to leave your mantis all together, they **will** eat each other until only a few strong ones remain, and eventually you will have just one big, tough female.

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 can stretch out your observation projects over a period of time. If you have a surplus, we suggest sending one home with each student. The mantis we sell are approved for agricultural use in Canada, though they are not native. They make a great addition to greenhouses. where they will manage some certain plant pests for you without the use of pesticides.

Due to the variables and risks surrounding mantis ootheca, we do not guarantee them. However, we will always try our very hardest to improve a negative experience: please contact us if your ootheca has not hatched after 10 weeks. We definitely have options to help mend the disappointment of an unhatched egg case.

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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Caring For & Feeding Your Mantis: *Mantis require daily care.* Feed and mist (with water) your mantis daily. You will need a constant supply of food.

Food: Begin with flightless fruit flies. At around one month, the mantis are big enough to switch onto small crickets. Offer food of appropriate size (no larger than 1/3 the total mass of the mantis) and feed a **variety** if possible. You will know the food is too big if the food is uneaten within a day or two.

Water: Your mantis will not drink water from a bowl. It is **essential** that you mist them daily; they will drink the mist from the surfaces in your enclosure. Moisture is also critical in easing the shedding of their exoskeleton as they grow.

Moulting: Your mantis will moult frequently at first, and then less regularly as they reach adulthood. This is when your mantis is at its most vulnerable. They will probably do it at night when conditions are good; they need high humidity (so again, make sure you are misting every day). Ensure you keep a variety of objects for them to climb around on and hang from at all times; they hang upside down to shed and will use gravity to help them, so being able to hang upside down is critical.