

Mantis Hatchlings (*Tenodera aridifolia sinensis*)

CARE INSTRUCTIONS

Kit Includes:

- 3 hatchling praying mantis (also called nymphs), each in a small travel container
- 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 plastic enclosures

When They Arrive:

Your mantis are each in small travel vial, with a damp paper towel and some things to walk on, while they make their journey to you. They need to be released into a larger container, and they will be hungry.

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. Feel free to 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.

Release the mantis: Once your houses are looking more mantis-friendly, carefully open the travel cup and release the mantis into the house. They can be gently encouraged with a finger. If the mantis is walking on the excelsior (those wood strings you can see in the travel cup), you can pick the excelsior up and drop both of them into the house. Put the fabric lid on so that the mantis does not escape.

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, continually tapping, tip the fly container over tip of the mantis house and tap a few out, so that 5-10 flies fall into the mantis house. Keep tapping so the flies don't walk all over. Replace the fly lid quickly, and close the mantis lid.

You will need to feed and water your mantis every day or so, or as you see the mantis run out of flies.

General Care:

- Keep the mantis container out of direct sunlight, but someplace warm: same with the flies. These containers turn into little greenhouses and can cook the bugs inside.
- A mantis will often eat a third of its body weight, or even more, 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: which means they will grow out of these deli containers. At that point, mantis can be released outside, or 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 can be risky as wild bugs might be exposed to pesticides, so exercise caution with that.

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. They make a great addition to greenhouses, where they will manage some certain plant pests for you without the use of pesticides.

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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