

Scorpion

Scorpions are predatory arachnids of the order Scorpiones. They have eight legs and are easily recognized by the pair of grasping pedipalps and the narrow, segmented tail, often carried in a characteristic forward curve over the back, ending with a venomous stinger.

The evolutionary history of scorpions goes back to the Silurian era 430 million years ago. They have adapted to a wide range of environmental conditions. Scorpions number about 1750 described species, with 13 extant families recognized to date. Only about 25 of these species are known to have venom capable of killing a human being.

Scorpion stings are painful but are usually harmless to humans. For stings from species found in North America, no treatment is normally needed for healthy adults, although medical care should be sought for children and for the elderly. More harmful stings from species found in South America, Africa, and western Asia may require medical attention.

- **Common Name:** Scorpion
- **Scientific Name:** *Scorpiones*
- **Distribution:** All continents except Antarctica
- **Size:** 0.3 ' - 9.0"
- **Life Span:** 3 to 5 years (but some can live for as long as 10 to 15 years)

Habitat

A 10 gallon tank is the ideal size for one or two scorpions. If you are going to have a communal habitat with multiple scorpions a 15-20L gallon tank is what you need.

Most species of scorpion can be kept in small groups but be cautious, even though some species can have multiple tank mates, cannibalism is always a real concern. The main requirements (as they are for most invertebrate pets) are that the enclosure is secure and can be maintained at an appropriate temperature and humidity. Scorpions are best kept in a glass aquarium with a good escape proof preferably lockable lid. Many scorpions are good climbers although these species tend to be the more dangerous ones and are not recommended.

You can decorate the terrarium with some flat pieces of wood, cork bark or pieces of ceramic plant pot which not only make the enclosure look more attractive but give your scorpions something to burrow under.

Heating

- Daytime Terrarium Temperature: 75-80°F
- Basking Temperature: N/A
- Nighttime Terrarium Temperature: 72-75°F

Scorpions are nocturnal and as such have no positive requirement for light. The best method for heating the tank is to use a heatmat. A suitably sized heatmat can be bought at Brother's Pets. A good heatmat should maintain the terrarium temperature at 77°F. You should position the heatmat so that it covers approximately one third of the base of the terrarium. This produces a temperature gradient and the scorpions can move between warm and cooler areas to regulate their body temperature.

It is important to note that if the temperature is too great the scorpions will burrow into the substrate to avoid the heat, unfortunately this brings them closer to the heatmat and there is a danger they will over heat and die. It is for this reason that the heatmat should not cover the entire base of the terrarium and it may be worth turning off the mat during particularly warm summer

spells (this obviously depends on where you live).

An alternate approach that avoids the issue of scorpions burrowing towards the heatmat is to attach the heatmat to the side of the tank rather than position it underneath. This allows the scorpion to burrow safely or cool itself by moving to the side furthest from the heatmat.

It is also strongly recommended that scorpion keepers use reptile thermometers to monitor the temperatures at various places within the tank and ensure a good temperature gradient is maintained.

Substrates

The type of substrate used in your terrarium depends on the particular species of scorpion you own, these fall in to two very basic types: Forest species and Desert Species.

Forest species for example those belonging to the genera *Pandinus* and *Heterometrus* come from Africa and Asia and require warm, humid conditions. A deep layer of peat-free compost (2.5" deep) should be placed in the terrarium, this can be covered with orchid bark chippings. The top of the substrate should be sprayed with water every day or so but never to a degree that it becomes very wet. Care should be taken that the substrate does not become mouldy or covered in fungus.

Desert species for example those from the genera *Centruroides*, *Buthus* and *Androctonus* (plus many others) require considerably drier conditions. The terrarium should be filled with approximately 4" of coarse sand, desert scorpions require little moisture and rarely need to be misted.

Nutrition

All scorpions are carnivores eating insects, spiders, other scorpions and even small lizards, snakes and small mammals, such as mice. The amount of food required by your scorpion will depend on the species and size. A large scorpion (eg *Pandinus*

imperator) will often eat two or three adult crickets a week. It is best to feed your scorpions at night so that their behaviour pattern will more closely resemble that of wild scorpions. The scorpions will not feed properly if kept in unsuitable conditions so left over food may be an indication that something is not right.

If you keep live food for your scorpion then you should also ensure that the live food is kept in appropriate conditions (adequate space, correct temperature and humidity and access to food and water).

In captivity Scorpions can be feed a number of captive breed insects like dubia roaches, crickets, mealworms, superworms, and waxworms just to name a few.

Scorpions must always have water to drink, but they can survive for months without food.

Scorpions use their pincers to capture and crush prey. They use their stingers to inject neurotoxic venom into their victims. As a result, their prey becomes paralyzed, making it easy for the scorpions to eat without any difficulty. Sometimes, scorpions can easily kill prey without any injection of venom at all by using their claws.

Scorpions use a small, clawlike structure that protrudes from their mouths called chelicerae. Chelicerae are very sharp, simplifying the act of pulling small amounts of food off the prey. This is also used in disposing of any solid matter, since scorpions can only ingest liquids.

Tips

My best tip is to never handle you scorpion. All species we sell are generally considered docile and relatively harmless however there are species that are potentially lethal. If you must handle your scorpions it is best to do so very gently with a long pair of foam tipped forceps.

This is only a basic care sheet, Please continue to educate yourself on your new family member.