



Mexican Red Kneed Tarantula *Brachypelma smithi*

- Mexican red kneed tarantulas are a fairly large tarantula that are black to dark colored with vibrant red to reddish range patches on the legs and joints.
- Native to the western mountain ranges of western Mexico.
- Mexican red kneed tarantulas are a burrowing to terrestrial species that tends to be solitary and nocturnal, as with most other tarantulas.
- A docile and hardy species, the Mexican red kneed tarantula is an attractive and suitable choice for beginners that has long been a popular choice among beginning hobbyists and pet owners.

Size

4-6 ½ inches leg span on average.

Housing

Provide a sturdy, secure, and escape proof terrarium or enclosure 5-10 gallons in size with a secure top for a single adult spider. Spiderlings can be housed in an appropriately sized plastic container or deli cup with adequate holes for ventilation. Acceptable substrate to use can include pesticide free potting soil, Eco-Earth, or bed-a-beast 3-4 inches in depth. Decorations and/or other cage furnishings and hide boxes can also be included as well. A fairly small, shallow water dish can also be provided, and should be cleaned regularly.

Mexican red kneed tarantulas are a hardy species that do best at room temperature between 70-80 degrees, or with a supplemental under tank heating pad if needed. No additional lighting or heating is necessary.

Feeding/Diet

Most species of tarantulas are very easy and inexpensive to feed, with the Mexican red kneed tarantula being no exception. Feeder crickets, mealworms, feeder roaches, and other feeder insects of appropriate size can be given every 4-7 days for younger spiders, and up to 10-14 days for adults. Feeder insects can also be gut loaded to provide additional beneficial nutrients for your tarantula. Uneaten food items after one or more days should be carefully monitored or removed thereafter.

Handling

Mexican red kneed tarantulas are typically a docile and slow moving species that can be handled carefully so as to avoid injuring the spider. Tarantulas are fragile animals, and accidentally dropping a spider can result in the rupture of its internal organs and/or exoskeleton, causing death to your tarantula. Mexican red kneed tarantulas may also kick urticating hairs from their abdomen and hind legs or “rear up” to display its fangs and front legs when upset or agitated. Although most tarantulas are not medically significant, with most being lesser than or just about equal to a bee sting, medical attention should still be sought from any apparent allergic reaction to a bite, or extreme irritation from urticating hairs from a pet tarantula.

Also be sure to practice basic cleanliness and hygiene associated with proper husbandry after touching or handling any animals or animal enclosures to prevent the possibility of contracting salmonellosis or any other zoonotic pathogens