



## Mantids/Mantises (Order Mantodea)

---

- Mantids, or mantises are an extremely large and diverse group of insects consisting of over 2,400 species overall!
- Mantids can be found in a wide variety of temperate to tropical environments throughout most of worldwide except Antarctica and colder regions depending on species.
- Mantids are extremely diverse in size, shape, color, and pattern depending on species. All maintains, however, have large triangular heads, bulging eyes, and a pair of distinctively modified fore limbs for capturing and grasping prey.
- Depending on the species, longevity for mantids can range anywhere from 4-8 weeks up to approximately 1 year.

### **Size**

Mantids vary greatly in size depending on age, sex, and species. They can range from 1 ½ to 5 ½” depending on species.

### **Housing**

Housing must be sealed and escape proof, as well as adequately ventilated. A secured 2- to 10 gallon aquarium, terrarium or similar sized tub or container with an appropriate lid is recommended (or at least 3 times the width of the mantis, and at least 2 times wider). Nearly any substrate can work for mantids if it is non -toxic and not treated with chemicals or pesticides. In addition, furnishings for allowing these insects climbing and hiding opportunities should also be provided, and can include artificial or live foliage, branches, twigs, or other cage decor. For water and hydration, misting at least once every few days is also recommended (or more frequently in areas of drier humidity). Mantids are typically aggressive toward one another, and can oftentimes be cannibalistic, and should therefore not be housed in multiples unless for breeding attempts.

Temperature and humidity requirements vary greatly depending on the species of mantid being maintained. Some species require damper, higher humidity environments, while others may require drier setups with lower to moderate humidity. Further research into these requirements for the specific species of mantid of interest is best recommended.

Spot clean the enclosure for wastes, feces, or uneaten food at least once per week. Be sure to periodically replace the substrate, clean, and disinfect the enclosure and its furnishings at minimum every 2-3 months.

### **Feeding/Diet**

Mantids tend to be insectivorous, feeding on smaller insects and other invertebrates they can capture and consume using their specialized pair of front forelimbs. In captivity, a variety of live feeder insects can be offered either in the enclosure or via tongs including crickets, flies, roaches, caterpillars, spring tails, mealworms, moths, and butterflies. Do not provide any food items which may be too large for your mantid, or are venomous or toxic. Feeding frequency depends on the age, sex, and size of your mantid, and can be every 1-4 days depending on the situation. Mantids also do not typically require any additional nutritional supplementation as well.

### **Handling**

Most mantids are fragile animals that should be handled quite carefully, if at all. Always scoop or cup them gently, and allow them to sit/walk freely without restraint if handling these insects is absolutely necessary.

**\*\*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\*\***