



Giant Millipedes *Class Diplopoda*

- Most millipedes can be characterized by their cylindrical, elongated bodies with 20 or more segments each consisting of two pairs of legs. Depending on the species, millipedes can vary in color from blackish, brown, reddish brown, to golden yellow-orange.
- Most millipedes can curl themselves up into a ball when threatened, and can emit a foul smelling fluid when handled.
- Most are typically terrestrial ground dwellers, and depending on the species, can be found in temperate, arid, or tropical regions except Antarctica. Some of the more popularly kept species are endemic to Africa and the Americas.
- Several of the larger species of millipede are the most popular to keep due to their slow moving and docile nature, and can make for very low maintenance pets to keep.

Size

Millipedes can range in size from 2 millimeters to well over 12 inches in length, depending on the species.

Housing

Provide a sturdy and secure escape proof enclosure, such as a 5 to 10 gallon terrarium for most commonly kept species. There are many substrates that can be used to house millipedes including orchard bark, potting soil, sphagnum moss, play sand, or any combination thereof for tropical to desert species of millipede. Furnishings can be provided, but ensure any live plants chosen are non toxic to millipedes and are sturdy and firmly planted. A feeding dish, shallow water dish, and hiding spaces should also be created or provided as well.

Most tropical species of millipede can be maintained at or around room temperature of 75-80 degrees F, seldom to exceed 85 degrees F. Some desert species requiring higher levels of heating can be provided a small under tank heating element as well. Millipedes are primarily nocturnal, and do not require any additional UV lighting or heating.

Feeding/Diet

Most species of millipedes are detritivores, feeding on dead or decaying plant and/or animal material. A variety of greens, fruits, and vegetables can be provided to millipedes including melon, cantaloupe, honeydew, bananas, lettuces, collard and mustard greens, tomatoes, squash, and others. Provide some level of vitamin D3 and calcium supplementation as well.

Handling

Most millipedes tend to be docile and slow moving, and can be easily handled without them biting or actively defending themselves. Care should be taken to avoid dropping or otherwise roughly handling your millipede, however. When threatened, most millipedes will roll into a ball and may emit a foul smelling odor.

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