

# Tarantulas

## DISASTER PREPAREDNESS MANUAL

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Yes folks, these are becoming popular as pets! There is some variation in needs among the various types kept as pets.

So, just some basic facts to get us started:

- There are over 800 species of tarantulas. Some live in trees, some burrow. They are also divided into Old World and New World species. Perhaps the most popular pet species is the Chilean Rose.
- Spider bites are venomous, some more than others.
- The best idea is to avoid handling them at all and thus to avoid getting bitten. If you do get bitten, report to the human first aid area promptly. Because of the risk of reaction to a bite, never handle a spider when you are alone; use the buddy system.
- Some spiders have hairs on their abdomen that can cause irritation to handlers. If the hairs get in a person's eyes, the resulting inflammation can be serious and will require attention from an ophthalmologist. Therefore, keep spiders away from your face, keep your hands away from your face after handling a spider or cleaning its cage, and wash your hands well in soap and water as soon as you are finished working with the spider or its cage. Best idea, again, is not to handle.
- Some females may live up to 20 years, while males only tend to live a couple of years.
- Spiders should have a dish of water available to them, but shallow enough they won't drown.
- Spiders that sit hunched with legs curled under may be ill.
- Male spiders spend most of their time and energy looking for a mate.
- Burrowing spiders do well in 2.5 or 5 gallon aquariums. Bigger is not better, as they are prone to injury from falling; also if their accommodations are too large they will have trouble finding their dinner. The container needs to have a sturdy, escape-proof lid that allows ventilation.
- Vermiculite makes nice bedding; no shavings.
- They need a hiding place - half a flowerpot works well.
- Tree dwellers do better in a 10 gallon tank set on end with stuff to climb on.
- They need to be kept at about 80 degrees F, but not in bright light and not with a heat source that will dry them too much.
- Different species require different levels of humidity.
- Crickets are a good diet for tarantulas.
- Humidity is most important during molting. Tarantulas lay on their back to molt, and are so fragile afterwards that even a cricket can injure them. Recovery may take two weeks.

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