



Emperor Scorpion

Emperor scorpions are the most commonly encountered pet scorpion in the U.S. pet trade. Their massive size, calm demeanor, and ease of care have made them the most popular as well. Although many people flinch at the idea of owning a scorpion, those that do find them to be among the most unique and fascinating pets one can own.

These scorpions are found throughout the tropical forests of western Africa, often in close proximity to human settlements. Emperor scorpions are terrestrial and spend their days hiding in the moist leaf litter of the forest floor before embarking on their nightly quest for food.

Emperor scorpions are considered the largest scorpion species on Earth. Although there are some Asian species that may be slightly longer, they do not obtain the massive bulk that makes emperors such an impressive sight. Adult lengths may reach or exceed 8 inches!

As a general rule, larger species of scorpions live longer than smaller ones. This species is no exception to that rule, and properly cared for emperor scorpions can live well over 10 years.

Housing

Despite their large size, this species does not require a huge amount of space to thrive. Emperor scorpions can be kept communally as long as the individuals being housed together are close to the same size.

Glass terrariums are ideal for this species as they allow for unobscured viewing of your pets, and can easily be heated in the winter. An enclosure having the floor space of a standard 10 gallon tank is adequate for one or two animals, with slightly larger quarters recommended for more animals.

Heating

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Lighting

As a tropical species, these scorpions should be maintained at an ambient temperature in the mid 80's during the day with a slight drop in temperature at night. Heat lights should be avoided if possible, as in general scorpions prefer darkness, and such heat sources have a tendency to dry out scorpion enclosures too quickly.

Undertank heat pads are a perfect solution for heating these animals. They install easily into the bottom of any glass enclosure, and provide a gentle, constant heat to the inhabitants.

Substrates

Emperor scorpions prefer slightly moist bedding, and the use of orchid bark, coconut husk products (Bed-a-Beast), or cypress mulch are all excellent choices. The bedding should be a few inches deep, as this species may occasionally burrow if they deem all available hiding places inadequate.

These animals are secretive in nature, and should have ample places to hide. Slabs or cork bark seem to be a favorite, but larger specimens will utilize manufactured reptile caves as well. The key is for the hide spots to be small and tight so that the scorpion feels completely safe and secure.

Water

A shallow water bowl should be provided for emperor scorpions at all times. A water dish not only serves as a source of drinking water, but also as a way to help maintain proper humidity.

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Humidity levels of 60% to 80% are ideal for this tropical species. Use of sphagnum moss coupled with regular mistings of the entire enclosure with room temperature water are all that is needed to maintain these levels.

Humidity

Nutrition

As with all scorpions, emperors are insectivores, and will feed happily on appropriately sized crickets and mealworms. Waxworms and the occasional newborn mouse can be offered as a source of dietary variety.

Emperor scorpions do not require a copious amount of food. 3 to 4 crickets a week will serve as a maintenance diet for this species. However, it is not uncommon for this species to gorge itself if given the opportunity and to then fast for an extended period of time.

Supplementation is not necessary for scorpions, but feeding the prey items a nutritious diet for one or two days prior to being offered as food is a good idea. This process, known as gut loading, will ensure that your scorpions receive a wide variety of vitamins and other nutrients via the GI tracts of the feeder prey.

Handling

Emperor scorpions are popular as pets not only as a result of their impressive appearance, but also for their calm and non-aggressive demeanor. This species is very reluctant to sting, and has a mild venom, but nonetheless, certain precautions must be taken.

As with any venomous animal, the reaction to a scorpions venom can be unpredictable. While one person may go un-phased by a sting, the next may have a severe reaction. Put bluntly, handle emperor scorpions at your own risk. Even though you are more likely to be pinched than stung, it is always better to err on the side of caution.

In general, scorpions should be viewed as a display animal first and foremost. If you want a pet to play with on a regular basis, consider another alternative.