

Orchid Mantis (*Hymenopus Coronatus*) Care Sheet

Housing

You don't need to buy a large or expensive vivarium/terrarium, for any mantis. If the environment is too big for them, it's much harder to control the heat/humidity and for the mantis to see/catch it's prey.

They need plenty of ventilation and a 5 Litre vented box at least 30cm high with plenty of hanging places (fine mesh/net fabric roof is best) would be more than enough for an adult female. A male being much smaller would only need a 1-2 Litre container at least 15cm high.

A tall smoothie cup with the dome of the lid trimmed and used to hold a fine net to the top of the cup is suitable for small nymphs.

It is not advisable to house any mantis together as they can ALL be cannibalistic, particularly females, so it's advisable to monitor when breeding as this is the most vulnerable time for males.



Environmental Conditions

These need temps from 20°C to 28°C and humidity 60%-80% with slightly less humidity for smaller nymphs.

Ensure there is good cross ventilation and heat/humidity is maintained. Also ensure bacteria and mould do not form in the viv as this can cause infections which can kill the mantis.

Males develop much faster than females, so if you have similar size nymphs you want to eventually breed, you can slow down the male by reducing the temperatures to 18°C to 24°C and give slightly less food. From 3rd-4th instar females will typically need four times more food than males, the difference increasing with each subsequent moult/instar.

Feeding

Most mantis prefer flying prey, but Orchids will also eat mealworms, locusts and cockroaches.

Never leave gnawing prey in the viv as they can harm the mantis when it is moulting and vulnerable.

These eat fruit flies up to 3rd instar then move on to larger prey such as green bottle flies from Pinkie maggots.

Please see our YouTube video for how to culture and poot flies; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xighuKtK_XU
Orchid mantis will also drink every 3-4 days, either from a fine mist of water or given by hand from a small shallow bottle cap.

Females of this species can overeat and this can cause bacteria and infection to form in the gut if they are not allowed enough time to digest their food properly. This can be fatal, so leave at least one day in every 3 without food to give them time to digest

Sexing

Males have 7 abdominal segments and are much smaller than females usually with a brown shoulder band and grow to approximately 2.5cm.

Females have 5 abdominal segments and are much larger usually with a green (but can also be brown) shoulder band and grow to approximately 11cm.

Both develop wings once adult and males being more skittish and a lighter build than females will fly more often, but despite their larger size females are more than capable of flying some distance.



Female and Male Adult

Moulting

Moulting can be the biggest killer of praying mantis.

Once they are fat enough they will stop eat for a couple of days in preparation for moulting. They become inactive and stretch and flex to loosen their old skin. Once their skin is loosened they are unable to move so if they lose their grip and fall they are unable to climb back up to hang.

If you find your mantis on the floor floppy or inactive **HANG IT BACK UP IMMEDIATELY!**

Time is of the essence here, with only minutes to hang it back up.

Be careful how you handle them, preferably manoeuvre them with a piece of net fabric or cotton bud and carefully place their feet to grip the net, try not to pick them up between your fingers as they are very fragile during moulting.

Oothecae and Nymphs

Once the female has mated and laid the ooth, leave it for 3-4 days to dry/harden.

Avoid leaving prey in with the female and her ooth as flies and gnawing prey can eat/damage the ooth, take the female out to feed her instead.

After 3-4 days carefully remove the mesh/fabric roof or foliage she has laid the ooth on and keep it in the same orientation as it was laid. Avoid touching the ooth as the outer foam is fragile.

Secure the ooth to the roof of a small ventilated tub/viv and keep it in the same environmental conditions (heat/humidity) as the adults. Avoid mould growing on the ooth as this will kill the eggs.

The ooth will hatch in appx 5-6 weeks with approximately 20-80+ nymphs depending on the size of the ooth and fertility of the female.

The nymphs all hatch together (looking like little shrimp) dropping from the ooth on strands.

They are orange and white as their bodies are expanded (to break free from the egg sack), they then slowly shrink and harden to a red and black colour.

They need to drink a few hours after hatching/moulting so spray a fine mist on the side of the viv.

It's best to individually house them from birth to ensure each nymph can eat and drink, as they can be aggressive towards each other from day one and easily bullied in to hiding and unable to reach food or water mist. They are also extremely vulnerable and completely defenceless when moulting so it is not recommended to keep them in a communal environment.



Orchid Nymphs Hatching

For further information and advice please contact us.