

## Chinese Mantis (*Tenodera sinensis*) – large nymph

### CARE INSTRUCTIONS

#### Things You Will Need:

- A spray bottle to mist your mantis
- Medium food items such as small crickets, house flies, small hornworms, or other soft-bodied prey
- A setup of at least 12x12x12 inches in size
- Decorations such as sticks, plants, or other items for the current enclosure (optional)

#### WHEN THEY ARRIVE:

**Check them over:** make sure they are upright and moving around. Mantis never lay down.

**Mist them immediately.** They may be dehydrated from shipping! Spray the inside of the container so that the paper towel is damp and there are droplets on the walls. Do not allow pools of water to form at the bottom.

**Feed:** it's good to offer prey once they arrive to you.

**Rehouse:** your large nymph needs to be rehoused immediately, it cannot live in the shipping container for long. A small or large flight cage, an aquarium, or an exoterra work: it needs to be 12" square. The mantis needs to hang upside down to molt, so make sure it has enough clearance for them to do so at all times. DO NOT add cedar of any type, or any materials that will cause mold (mold is always an issue). Be extremely wary of wild-collected material: anything from outdoors may potentially be contaminated with substances such as pesticides, insecticides, herbicides, or fertilizers. Be away from materials that come from roadsides where runoff and fume residue will be an issue.

#### GENERAL CARE:

**Keep animals out of direct sunlight. Do not leave in hot vehicles or exposed to dangerous elements.**

**WATER:** they need to be heavily watered 2-3 times a week minimum, by misting them gently. A shallow dish with rocks or a sponge can also stand as a bowl for larger mantis.

**FOOD:** We suggest feeding 2-3 times per week. Each mantis will about 30% of their body size per feeding. They need live prey. Do not overfeed: if you always see uneaten prey after a day or two, you are feeding too much.

*Note: if using crickets, be careful of cricket diet. Never feed your crickets carrot.*

**HUMIDITY:** they need 60-85% humidity for healthy molting. Regular misting helps, but finding ways to maintain high humidity in the enclosure is ideal. A planted tank or bioactive setup is ideal, though these can be kept with much less fuss than that.

**House Separately:** Mantis are opportunistic predators: they will eat each other. Do not put mantis together.

**Shedding:** Your mantis will shed it's skin (moult) numerous times, leaving behind a crispy husk.

**Housing:** Flight cages, aquariums, vivariums, and bioactive setups are great. Many people house their mantis in grow tents with their plants. Some even let them free roam (though we advise against that – can be dangerous!). Mantis enjoy having something to climb on and hang upside down from. A home should be at least four times the body length in height and width: bigger is ALWAYS better.

**Lifespan:** The natural lifespan of a mantis is about 6-8 months, and they will reach nearly 4 inches in length, growing wings once they reach their final "instar" (aka molt). Your mantis may already be 3-4 months in age.

*We guarantee alive arrival if your mantis have been shipped: once the mantis arrive, be ready to take care of them. These are living creatures and have needs of their own you'll have to meet. We can't control what happens past the point where you have received your mantis, but we can assist you on your mantis adventure. Should you encounter any problems with your mantis, call us right away so that we can help.*



**Insect Safety:** your mantis are fragile and delicate, and a bit jumpy. You can let them walk on you but don't try to pinch them or grab them. Once they are big, they are very exciting to hold. They cannot bite you.

**Insect Health:** Keep your mantis away from aerosols, sprays, perfumes/room sprays, essential oils, cedar, cleaning products, pesticides, and materials that offgas (such as Teflon and non-stick cookware). These are bad for all bugs.

#### CAN I RELEASE MY MANTIS?

**We do not suggest doing this.**

Mantis are BIG insects: bigger than most native predator insects in Canada. As adults, they are indiscriminate predators and will eat bees, butterflies - they are big enough to eat hummingbirds! In terms of bugs, this is an apex predator – like a T-rex to other invertebrates.

It is true that they are *legal* to release in Canada (as agricultural pest control), but we believe there are more ethical and responsible choices available to us humans. Please consider the risk you are putting our native wildlife in by releasing non-native mantis!

Please also consider the mantis themselves, which can still fall victim to predators in the wild, and for the environment: survival rates on released mantis are very low (your mantis have never lived in the wild).

**Mantis make an interesting addition to any setting and are very fun to observe and report on, with a shorter natural lifespan than most "starter pets." They are a beautiful addition to a bioactive viv with isopods and plants. You will notice them watching food items and watching you too! The more you interact with them, the tamer they become.**