

Mantis Ootheca (*Tenodera sinensis*)

CARE INSTRUCTIONS

Includes:

-1 Chinese mantis ootheca (egg case)

Things You Will Need:

- food for your mantis (flightless fruit flies work well)
- A spray bottle with misting capabilities
- Somewhere to hatch the egg case and house resulting adults



Be aware that the mantis ootheca are highly unpredictable, and can take 2-10 weeks to hatch. Although success rates are very high, it is possible that some egg cases (around 5%) are infertile. There is no way for us to predict this as the female mantis will lay an ootheca regardless of fertilization.

Hatching the Ootheca: hang it inside an enclosure by threading a needle or pin through the top surface of the ootheca (usually has a stick or cylindrical depression in it) and affixing it to the upper corner or wall of an enclosure, or to a stick, so that it is hanging downwards. Beware of glass or plastic surfaces in your habitat: mantis struggle to climb on these. Keep it warm: ideally, between 22 and 26 degrees for hatching, and with a humidity of 65-80%. This will require daily misting as well, to mimic morning dew. Keep your egg case away from anything dangerous for bugs, including cedar wood, chemical cleaners and sanitizers or sprays, non-stick cookware, essential oils insecticides/herbicides, predators.

When they Hatch: You can end up with anywhere from 50-400 mantis hatching out per ootheca, with an average of 150. They will all emerge simultaneously, pouring out like a little waterfall, in a very short window of time (under an hour). Upon emergence, their bodies will be very thin and threadlike. It may take a day or so for them to be ready to eat, but following that they must be fed and watered every day. A mantis can often eat a third of its body weight, or even more, each day or two. *Do not handle your mantis: they are very delicate!*

For the first couple weeks of life, they can be housed communally. As they get big, they will begin to eat each other, so you will need to split them up within a couple weeks. For individual housing, we have seen people use large deli cups, mason jars with a mesh top, small critter keepers, flight cages, aquariums, or other things.

As your mantis grows, it will always need a house at least four times its own body length in height and width. Always add something for your mantis to climb on. If you continue to leave your mantis all together, they **will** eat each other until only a few strong ones remain, and eventually you will have just one big, tough female.

Things to avoid: *Air contaminants and toxicants.* As mentioned, keep your egg case and any insects away from anything that impacts air quality: aerosols, perfumes/room sprays, essential oils, cedarwood, cleaning products, pesticides, and any materials that off-gas (such as Teflon and non-stick cookware).

Also avoid letting them dry out! They need moisture. Avoid handling your mantis too much when young: they are pretty delicate.

Chinese Mantis for Education: Mantis make an interesting addition to any setting and are very fun to observe and report on. You will notice them watching food items, and watching you too! They are slow growing so you can stretch out your observation projects over a period of time. If you have a surplus, we suggest sending one home with each student. The mantis we sell are approved for agricultural use in Canada, though they are not native. Please consider the risks of releasing non-native predators into the wild before you make that choice.

Due to the variables and risks surrounding mantis ootheca, we do not guarantee them. Instructions for larger nymphs and adults can be found online.

Butterfly Wings N' Wishes respectfully acknowledges that we operate on Treaty 6 territory, a traditional gathering place for diverse Indigenous peoples whose histories, languages, and cultures continue to influence our business, our way of life, and our community.