

Chinese Mantis Hatchlings (*Tenodera sinensis*)

CARE INSTRUCTIONS

Kit Includes:

- 3 hatchling Chinese mantis (also called nymphs – L3-L4, usually)
- 3 16 oz vials to house each mantis
- 1 container of flightless fruit flies for feeding them (on Repashy Superfly Diet)

Things You Will Need:

- A spray bottle to mist your mantis
- decorations such as sticks for the enclosures
- After about a month, you'll need new, larger housing, and switch to crickets or larger feeders



WHEN THEY ARRIVE:

Check them over: make sure they are upright and moving around. Mantis never lay down. If you think there are any issues with your mantis (or the flies for that matter): please take pictures and contact us right away! Or if containers are broken. We have an **alive arrival guarantee** – but you must contact us within 24 hours of delivery.

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. **Ideal humidity is 65-80%.**

Feed: If there are no flies alive in the container, you can add a couple. Each baby mantis only eats a couple at a time: do not add more than just a few flies. See below on how to feed.

Redecorate: Optional. Your mantis had some things to help them travel: damp paper towel and some excelsior to walk on. You can keep or discard these items. The mantis need things to walk on and somewhere to hang upside down to shed their skins as they grow. **DO NOT** add cedar of any type, or any materials that will be too moldy, dirty, or are potentially contaminated with things like pesticides, herbicides, or fertilizers: stay away from materials that come from a roadside where fumes will be an issue.

ESSENTIALS:

Humidity should be 65-80%, temperature 21-28 C (Celsius). There should always be a container height of 4x the length of the mantis.

WATER:

They need to be watered every day or two, by misting them gently. You should see them drinking!

As they get older, you can add a shallow dish with rocks, or a cotton ball, into the enclosure as a secondary water dish – but *they still need misting*, so do not rely on that.

FOOD:

When very young, offer food nearly daily: anytime you see them out of live flies. As they grow older, you will find you can feed less frequently: a mantis over 2 months in age is fine eating 2-3 times per week.

A simple suggestion is that they eat about 30% of their body size at each feeding, which in a tiny baby is not much – just a couple flies! Do not overfeed: if you always see dead flies or leftover food after a couple days because they are uneaten, you are feeding too much.

HOW TO FEED:

We have a video about this on our youtube, which is linked in the instruction portal of our website.

1. Get the lid loose on the mantis container so you can pop it off quick.
2. Tap the bottom of the fly container on a surface so that all the flies fall to the bottom. They can't fly but they are fast walkers.
3. Open the mantis lid a bit. Tapping continuously, tip the fly container over the lip of the mantis house and tap **only a few** flies out. Keep tapping if you need to.
4. Close the containers.

5. **Once they outgrow the flies**, which takes about a month, you will need to begin sourcing your own live food such as crickets. Be cautious of catching wild food: wild bugs are often exposed to pesticides. They do need live prey!
6. ***If you feed crickets, never feed your crickets carrot, which is linked to toxicity deaths in mantis.***

OTHER GENERAL CARE & INFO:

Keep containers out of direct sunlight.

House Separately: Mantis are opportunistic predators: they will eat each other.

Shedding: Your mantis will shed its skin (moult) numerous times, leaving behind a crispy husk. Proper humidity will promote healthy molting.

Housing: The provided containers will last around a month, at which point you will need to upgrade. All kinds of containers work! Aquariums/critter keepers, planted tanks, flight cages, or handmade things – just monitor your humidity and temperature to ensure they are happy. Always add something for your mantis to climb on and hang upside down from. As noted above, the housing should be at least four times the body length in height and width: bigger is ALWAYS better.

Male VS Female: Females get notably larger and more heavy bodied than males, and as adults are reluctant to fly if not almost entirely flightless. When viewed from underneath, females have 6 abdominal segments, and males have 8.

Lifespan: The natural lifespan of a mantis is about 6-9 months, and they will reach nearly 4 inches in length, growing wings once they reach their final “instar” (aka

molt).

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. The more you hold them, the tamer they will be! They cannot bite you, but they can grab with their raptorial arms: which feels like a little prickly stick (but does not break the skin).

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.

ADULT MANTIS: EGG LAYING & BREEDING

Mantis females will lay egg cases whether they have met a male or not: so keep an eye out for that. They lay them vertically or underside surfaces, and it's cool to watch. Eggs are laid in a foamy mass, which then hardens – this mass is called an Ootheca, which can contain hundreds of eggs. Unfertilized ootheca do not hatch.

Introducing males and females is tricky: be prepared to lose

your male and have too many babies! Females should be well fed before any male is introduced, and you should watch them carefully. He should hop on her back pretty quickly: and they will stay "paired" for anywhere between 4 and 10 hours.

Once fertilized, she can lay 5-9 egg cases throughout her life. Some may be decoys, with no eggs: a tricky way to camouflage her own young.

CAN I RELEASE MY MANTIS?

Do not do this. Mantis are BIG insects: bigger than most native predator insects in Canada. As adults, they eat bees, butterflies - they are big enough to eat hummingbirds.

While it is true that they are legal to release in Canada (as agricultural pest control), there are more ethical choices to make for the mantis themselves, which can still fall victim to predators in the wild, and for the environment.

Please consider the risk of releasing non-native predators into the wild before you make that choice.

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 (though longer than a lot of other bugs). You will notice them watching food items and watching you too! The more you interact with them, the tamer they become.

Mantis should never be released in Canada.

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

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.

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