



## CARE GUIDE



# GOLDEN HUNTSMAN

*Invertebrate keeping guideline*



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# GOLDEN HUNTSMAN

*Beregama aurea*



## PROFILE

Golden Huntsmen are one of Australia's largest huntsmen. They are found in the coastal forest of northern Australia. They tend to live on the trunks of large eucalypts, particularly those with smooth white trunks. They feed on a wide range of other invertebrates including moths, crickets, cockroaches and other spiders.

Like other huntsman, these spiders are extremely fast, and have the ability to run sideways and squeeze into very narrow crevices. They are covered in fine sensory hairs which are extremely sensitive to air movement. This assists them in detecting the movement of prey and the approach of predators.

This species lays its eggs encased within a flattened white silk egg sac. They usually secure this in a dark place such as under loose tree bark and stay with their eggs until after they hatch. The young emerge 30 - 60 days after being laid (they will develop faster in warmer conditions), and several hundred spiderlings may emerge from a single egg sac. The spiderlings will cluster around their mother for a week or two after they emerge and will tolerate each other during this stage. Once they disperse any chance meetings of the siblings will often result in one eating the other.

These spiders grow by shedding their outer skeleton (exoskeleton). This process is called ecdysis or moulting. To moult successfully they need to hang uninterrupted beneath a leaf or branch. Their colour darkens and they stop feeding a few days before moulting, and once they begin to moult they usually complete the process in about 10 minutes. They usually will not feed for about 24 hours after moulting. Males and females can be identified as they mature; males have enlarged bulbs on the ends of their pedipalps (feelers) which females lack, and males tend to have thin bodies and longer legs. The females tend to be more colourful (pictured above), whereas males are often more brownish in colour.



## FOOD

Live insects. Crickets, cockroaches, moths and flies are ideal. The food insects should be no larger than 1/3 of the size of your spider. Feeding twice a week is recommended, but young spiders will feed more often when they are growing. Remove live insects from your enclosure if your spider has not eaten them within 12 hours.

## WATER

Mist spray lightly around your spider every second day – it will drink the droplets.

## ENCLOSURE

The enclosure needs to be large enough to allow your spider to shed its exoskeleton properly. An ideal enclosure should be higher than it is wide, as Golden Huntsmen like to climb upwards. Minibeast Wildlife's pop-up mesh enclosures or Nano Habitat is ideal. Add flat pieces of bark set at vertical or diagonal angles to your enclosure to give the spider something to climb on and hide behind. Ensure the enclosure is not placed in direct sunlight as this may cause it to overheat. Make sure there is plenty of ventilation in your enclosure but ensure there are no gaps which allow the spider to get out.

## CLEANING AND MAINTENANCE

Remove any food waste that has fallen to the bottom of the enclosure.

## SUBSTRATE

Not essential, but you can use leaf litter or coco-peat to help soak up any excess moisture.

## HANDLING

Direct handling is not recommended. They are fast spiders and can be lost easily if free-handled. Human skin oils can also interfere with the spiders' foot hairs limiting their climbing ability. Although these spiders are not dangerously venomous and quite timid, adults do have large fangs and could give a painful bite. If you need to transfer them, they can be easily guided into a jar or plastic container.

## TEMPERATURE

The safe temperature zone for this species is 18° – 26°C, but will tolerate 8°– 30° for limited periods.

## COMMON ISSUES

Due to their flattened bodies and fast speed, these spiders are excellent escape artists! Ensure there are no gaps around the lid or doors of your enclosure, and take care not to allow your spider to run out when opening it.



60-80%



1-2 years life span



These animals are captive bred, and should not be released into the wild

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