



CARE GUIDE



# SPECTACULAR CRAB SPIDER

*Thomisus spectabilis*

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## PROFILE

Spectacular Crab Spiders are small ambush hunters found along much of Australia's coastline. They are absent in the far south but present from around Sydney in the east around to Perth in the west.

Crab spiders belong to the family Thomisidae and are also known as flower spiders. The females of this species have two colour forms, white and yellow. Individuals living on yellow flowers will often be vivid yellow, however their colour will fade if moved away from the yellow environment. The tiny males are much smaller than the females and are orange-brown in colour. Males that have found females will often sit upon their abdomens when not mating.

Like most of their relatives, Spectacular Crab Spiders hunt by sitting still on foliage and waiting for prey to approach. Their diet is predominantly insects that visit flowers including bees, flies, butterflies, moths, crickets, cockroaches and katydids.

When hunting these spiders sit motionless with their four powerful front legs outstretched ready to grapple any insect that arrives. When an insect visits the flower or leaf they are perched on, they may move with stealth towards it, or wait for it to come within reach. When in range the spiders grab the prey with the front legs and quickly bite it. While the venom is harmless to humans, it works very quickly on their prey and as a result they are able to successfully capture prey many times larger than themselves.

## FOOD

Live insects, small crickets are ideal. Although they can capture insects larger than themselves it is safer to use insects about the size of the spider or slightly smaller. As they are ambush hunters, the food insects must be able to wander up to wherever the spider is sitting, the spider will not go searching for them. Ensure that this is possible.

Feeding once a week is recommended depending on the size of the prey. A well-fed spider will have a full and rounded abdomen.

## WATER

Mist spray lightly around your spider every second day – it will drink the droplets. Mist spraying should only be fine so that it evaporates within a few hours – pooling water may drown your spider.

## ENCLOSURE

These spiders are relatively small, so jars or small plastic (food storage) containers make ideal enclosures. Minibeast Wildlife's Spiderling (Sling) and scorpion raising enclosure is ideal. Ventilation in the form of small holes is suitable – ensure holes are not large enough to enable the spider to escape.

## SUBSTRATE

No specific substrate is required, but coco-peat or paper towel may be used to absorb excess moisture and maintain humidity. These spiders will require items such as leaves and flowers to perch on. They will utilise artificial plants and flowers which can make attractive enclosure decorations.

## CLEANING AND MAINTENANCE

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

## HANDLING

These spiders are mildly venomous but are regarded as harmless to humans. They are best moved from place to place by allowing them to climb onto a leaf or stick and carefully moving them into a container.

## TEMPERATURE

The safe temperature range for these spiders is 16 -24°C. They will tolerate both higher and lower temperatures for periods of time. Avoid extreme lows (below 10°C) and highs (above 30°C).

## GOOD TO KNOW

These spiders will spend long periods of time motionless when not interested in food. This is normal behaviour.



60-80%



Around a year life span



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

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