



CARE GUIDE



FIERCE PREDATORY KATYDID

Hexacentrus mundurra



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PROFILE

Fierce Predatory Katydids are found in grasslands and within forest clearings in north eastern Australia. They typically frequent tall grasses and shrubs where they spend the day well hidden and emerge at night to feed and reproduce. They are a late-season species, adults appearing and calling at the end of summer, and extending through autumn and into early winter.

The common name of this species is very apt as they are aggressive and ruthless predators. They are ambush hunters, usually perching face-down upon foliage and waiting for suitable invertebrate prey to approach them. They will readily attack and subdue insects equal and sometimes exceeding their own body size. Their prey includes other katydids, crickets, grasshoppers, mantids, beetles and spiders. Fierce Predatory Katydids sense their prey with their long antennae, and sometimes even use their antennae to 'herd' small insects towards them. When in range the predator will leap onto the prey with great force, tackling it with the spinose front legs simultaneously inflicting grievous damage to the prey with its powerful mandibles.

Males of this species are very distinctive and have large 'balloon' type wings. These appear to be used to amplify the loud 'zzzzzt' call produced by the males in order to attract females.

FOOD

Live insects (crickets, cockroaches, grasshoppers). Insects such as mealworms may be fed via forceps. Minibeast Wildlife's Predatory Katydid Food is also suitable. This can be offered in a dish such as a bottle cap, and should be replaced every three days or as required.

WATER

Mist spray the enclosure once a day. This will keep the enclosure damp and the humidity high. The katydids will drink from the moisture on the foliage and branches.

ENCLOSURE

An enclosure ideally needs to be around 30cm H x 30cm W x 30cm D to adequately house 1 or 2 adults. Live plants may be used, however artificial plants are also suitable and require little maintenance. Sticks and branches can be placed within the enclosure as they are required for the insects to hang from whilst moulting. These katydids are highly cannibalistic, so should only be kept together for breeding purposes.

SUBSTRATE

Not required, but the base of the enclosure can be covered in a substrate of coco-peat (available from Minibeast Wildlife's Bug Shop) to a depth of at least 4cm. Alternatively, an egg laying tub can be placed at base of the enclosure (a tub with 4cm depth of moist of coco-peat). While substrate is not essential, it will accommodate breeding. If you don't use substrate, it can help with clean up to put some paper down on the bottom of the enclosure to catch the frass (poo).

CLEANING AND MAINTENANCE

Remove frass (poo) and any spilled Katydid Food from the bottom of the enclosure once a week. This can be done when the food plant is changed over.

HANDLING

Direct handling is not recommended as they are relatively lightly built and may be injured in attempt to restrain them. These katydids have powerful mandibles and can inflict a painful bite if mishandled. They are unpredictable and may leap away without warning.

TEMPERATURE

This species will do best at 24° – 28°C, but will tolerate 16 – 24°C and have a slower growth rate.

COMMON ISSUES

Care should be taken when opening the enclosure as this species is a powerful jumper and can rapidly escape.



Up to one year life span



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



50-60%



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