



CARE GUIDE



SPITTING SPIDER

Dictis striatipes



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PROFILE

Spitting Spiders are small web-based hunters that are most active at night. There are several species within Australia, all quite similar in shape, size and behaviour. *Dictis striatipes* is found in the northern tropical regions of Australia and are visually different than most other species in that the females are a dark uniform colour compared to the light, banded appearance of others.

They are common in and around human dwellings in northern Australia, particularly in timber constructions and under eaves. In nature they are often found under bark and within cracks and hollows in trees.

Spitting Spiders create small funnel-like webs leading to a crack or crevice, with silken lines running out from the retreat. The web acts to trap and hinder the movement of prey and to alert the Spitting Spider of its presence. Once prey is detected the spider cautiously approaches and uses its long front legs to gage the distance it is from it. Once within range the Spitting Spider activates its unique weapon – the ability to spit venom-laced silk, a liquid which congeals upon impact to a sticky mass. The action is super-fast, taking a mere 1/700th of a second.

Spitting Spiders create a loosely woven round egg sac which is held by the female using her chelicerae. The egg sac usually contains around 20 eggs and takes around three weeks to hatch. The spiderlings will cluster around the retreat for a short while before dispersing.

FOOD

Small live insects; small crickets are ideal and should be smaller the body size of the spider. Pin-head crickets are excellent food for young Spitting Spiders. Vinegar flies, juvenile slaters and other small harmless invertebrates may also be used. Remove live insects from your enclosure if your spider has not eaten them within 12 hours.

WATER

Light mist spray the enclosure to maintain the humid environment. While relatively high humidity is required, the enclosure should not be wet or have free water present.

ENCLOSURE

As these spiders are very small, a small enclosure is best so that the spider is easy to find. Minibeast Wildlife's Spiderling (Sling) and scorpion raising enclosure is ideal. Ventilation holes need to be smaller than the spider or should be covered in mesh. Enclosure furnishings should include items that present options for the spider to create a retreat inside. These are best secured in a vertical manner to allow the spider to climb up and create a retreat. Pieces of bark are ideal.

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, sphagnum moss or coco-peat for display purposes or to help increase humidity within the enclosure.

HANDLING

While these spiders are regarded as harmless to humans, handling is not recommended as they are quite delicate and can escape.

TEMPERATURE

The safe temperature range for this species is 18 – 26°C but will tolerate cooler conditions for limited periods. Cooler temperatures will result in a slower growth rate. Beware of overheating.

GOOD TO KNOW

Ensure the enclosure does not become too damp and that food presented is not too big and doesn't intimidate the spider.



60-80%



Around a year life span



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

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