

shopping list

Step 1 - Enclosure

- Enclosure; 30cm x 30cm x 30cm minimum
- Substrate
- Water bowls (x2)
- Food bowl
- Hide
- Climbing timber
- Ornaments

Step 2 - Maintenance

- Heat mat
- Water sprayer
- Salt water

Step 3 - Nutrition

- Hermit crab food

Common Health Issues

Dehydration/Moulting Issues: Low humidity may result in the hermit crab having difficulty moulting.

Lethargy: If temperatures drop too low in winter and the hermit crabs are not heated, they will become lethargic and may even die.



If you notice any of the following symptoms, please contact your vet.
• Loss of appetite • Lethargy

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RE10



HERMIT CRAB

Pagurus sinuatus



FAST FACTS

LIFESPAN: 10-15 years
SIZE: 1-8cm

ENCLOSURE: Enclosure of at least 30x30x30cm
DIET: Hermit crab food, with fruit and vegetables

Find out everything you need for your Hermit Crab in 3 simple steps



Enclosure



Maintenance



Nutrition

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YOUR CARE GUIDE FOR HERMIT CRABS

Step 1 - Enclosure



Hermit crabs come from the northern, tropical regions of Australia, living in the coastal dune-forests where fresh water is available. Weekly they migrate to the shoreline to bath in the saltwater.

A hermit crab enclosure should be at least 30x30x30cm. As they require constant access to saltwater, fresh drinking water and food, separate bowls must be provided for each. Along with a heat source, areas for the crabs to climb on and move about are also essential. This can often be achieved with a log, rock or tree branch. An absorbant substrate such as coco peat is important. The substrate should be kept moist to assist in maintaining adequate levels of humidity. Hermit crabs love to burrow, so the bedding can be 2-3cm deep.

Hermit crabs are great climbers so their enclosure must be secured with a lid.



Step 2 - Maintenance



Hermit crabs are ectothermic, or 'cold-blooded'. They therefore need heat provided to them from their surroundings. In your home, that is best done with a heat lamp or heat mat, dependant on the size of your enclosure. There must be a temperature variance in the tank so the crabs can move to warm or cool areas as they require; one end should be heated to around 24°C–28°C, and the other end left at room temperature.

Hermit crabs require high humidity to keep their gills moist and allow them to breathe properly. Humidity must be maintained at 75-90% by using an automatic mister, or frequently spraying the enclosure with water.

A hermit crab enclosure should be spot cleaned weekly, with all bowls cleaned and the water changed daily. The substrate should be changed monthly, or more frequently if required.

Hermit Crabs require saltwater for bathing. This should be provided in a separate bowl to their fresh drinking water.

Hermit Crabs live in other creatures discarded shells. As they grow they will leave their old shell and find another larger one to move into. A few spare shells, which should be only slightly larger than their current one, should be kept in the enclosure for such occasions. Like other crabs, as they grow hermit crabs need to cast off their outer skeleton, this usually occurs about twice a year. After the crab has moulted it needs to be left alone for several weeks until its new skeleton hardens. After moulting, the skin is usually left on the floor. Crabs will eat this skin as it is rich in calcium. They may eat this discarded old skin before you know they have actually moulted. Crabs will usually bury in the substrate for a week or so while their skin hardens up. Make sure there is plenty of food and water in their enclosure even if they are inactive.

Step 3 - Nutrition



Hermit crabs are opportunistic, scavenging omnivores that feed upon a wide variety of foods such as fruit, vegetables, insects and even carrion.

In captivity, food should be available to hermit crabs at all times and placed in shallow dishes to prevent fouling of the tank.

A dry commercial hermit crab flake or pellet can be used as the primary source of food. Fresh fruits and vegetables such as apple, carrot, kale and banana should be offered 2-3 times per week. Hermit crabs will also readily accept dead insects such as dried mealworms, and crickets which can be coated with a calcium and vitamin supplement.

Some species of hermit crabs such as the strawberry hermit crab may develop bright red and orange colouration when fed foods that are high in carotenes such as cooked carrot, sweet potato and papaya.

Caution!

Many crabs fall victim to poisoning without their owners realizing it. Cleaning chemicals such as furniture polish, insect sprays, room deodorants and fresheners can kill your crabs if the spray gets into the food and water bowls. As they have very small bodies, only a small amount can have devastating effects.

Do not place your crabs onto carpet for recreation. Many carpets are cleaned with chemicals, and much of the chemical is left as residue within the carpet fibres after the carpet has dried. It is safer to play with your hermit crab on tiles or lino floors which are cleaned and rinsed so no residue remains or you can even take them outside on the lawn.