

STICK INSECTS

Varieties - Goliath Stick Insect (*Eurycnema goliath*) & Spiny Leaf Insect (*Extatosoma tiaratum*)

Stick insects, AKA phasmids, make great pets for children & adults alike. They are fascinating to learn from. In both species, the females grow larger than the males. Both sexes possess wings, however, the females have large heavy abdomens filled with eggs, so cannot take flight if threatened. Females can live up to 18 months, while the males have a shorter life of around 9 – 10 months.

Although starting small, the Goliath Stick Insect can grow to 25cm in length, while the Spiny Leaf Insect is a little smaller at a maximum size of 15-20cm. Keeping this in mind, the size of your adult is what determines what you will need for an enclosure.

Interesting facts!

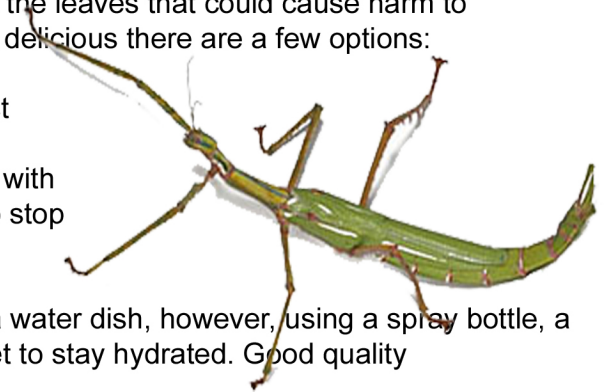
Stick insects are parthenogenic, meaning that the females can create a replica of herself without mating!

Stick insects will mate all year round. The female lays her eggs on leaf litter & they take between 3 - 12 months to hatch. A baby stick insect is known as a 'nymph'.



Food - Your stick insect will thrive on eucalypt leaves. Adult Goliaths will also readily eat Wattle (acacia sp.) & Bottle Brush (callistemon sp.). The main thing to remember is that your source is not open to any pesticide spraying, or contamination from heavy pollutants such as a busy street or motorway. Wash your leaves after collection with fresh water & make sure there are no other insects present on the leaves that could cause harm to your pet. To keep your leaves juicy & delicious there are a few options:

- Keep your leaves watered in a florist block
- Within a jar of water that is covered with cling wrap or filled with small rocks to stop your pets from drowning.



Water - You do not need to provide a water dish, however, using a spray bottle, a daily spray will be enough for your pet to stay hydrated. Good quality & fresh leaves will also help with this.

Replace your stick insects leaves about twice a week. They may require an extra change during hot weather if the leaves deteriorate.

As your nymphs grow & moult, they will start to change in colour as they reach adulthood.

Your Goliaths will end up a vibrant green, while the Spiny Leaf Insects will become a mustard to rust brown.

Camouflage is the key to survival with these guys. You might see them swaying along, mimicking a leaf or twig in the breeze.

Handling your stick insect - To handle, gently move your pet from it's resting branch to your hand by slowly sliding it along under the insect & it will start to move its limbs onto you. Slow & steady!

Housing - The ReptiOne 300TT is perfect for your pet insects. Both species require an environment with good airflow, so an enclosure with ventilation via air holes at the top/lid will keep your insects happy. A substrate such as Coco Peat will keep in moisture & allow humidity within your set-up. This is needed especially for growing nymphs. As they grow they will shed their skin a number of times until they reach adulthood.

They will also consume this, so you should keep it in the enclosure for a few days after shedding to allow this.

