

Giant African Millipede

Scaphiostreptus parilis



CARE SHEET

Developed with and approved by a Qualified Veterinarian

The millipede's name means "thousand-legger," which is what they appear to be. Millipedes actually have only 200 to 300 legs and at least 4 eyes. They are gentle and easy to handle, sleep during the day, and come out in the evening to eat.



Is a millipede the right companion animal for you?

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Check "Yes" or "No" after reading the following statements:

1. I have an appropriate location and space for a millipede.
2. I can commit to handling millipedes as little as possible.
3. I can commit to providing proper care for this millipede.
4. A mature person will provide responsible and primary care for this companion animal.

If you answered "Yes" to these statements, a giant African millipede may be the right choice for you! Continue reading about how to care for a giant African millipede and consult with a PETCO associate to learn more. PETCO is committed to responsible companion animal care.

Average Size 4 to 11 inches long

Life Span 3+ years with proper care

Diet Vegetables and fruits such as romaine lettuce, squash, melon slices, and bananas; avoid iceberg lettuce because it does not provide enough nourishment; Apples and cucumbers are favorites but everything must be sliced or peeled due to their weak mouthparts; ground cuttlebone will supply needed lime salts

Feeding Feed once a day, as much food as they will consume in a night

Housing Size – A terrarium, such as a 5-10 gallon glass aquarium, with a screen mesh lid fastened tightly with metal clips to prevent escape

Habitat – Overturn a piece of bark or lean a couple of small flat rocks together to form a shallow cave for sleeping

Temperature – 60° F to 78° F

Humidity – Mist inside the terrarium every; one corner should be misted heavily to allow them to select the appropriate level of moisture

Substrate – Mulch-type commercial material; unbleached paper towels, soil, dampened sphagnum moss, and bark; avoid gravel and artificial turf (too harsh for skin)

Lighting – Keep habitat away from sunlight; millipedes sleep during the day and do not like bright, hot lights; a red or blue bulb will allow you to watch the evening activities of your millipede without disturbance

Water – Always have a shallow dish of chlorine-free water available; place a sponge or stones in the dish to keep the millipede from drowning; if a sponge is used in the dish it must be replaced often so that bacteria cannot grow.

Millipedes may share an enclosure without harming each other

Recommended Supplies

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate size terrarium | <input type="checkbox"/> Bark for hiding place |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate substrate | <input type="checkbox"/> Shallow water and food dishes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Humidity gauge | <input type="checkbox"/> Water dish and sponge |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Book about millipedes | |

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Normal Behavior and Interaction

Generally easy to handle; millipedes don't bite, move slowly and have tough shells
Sleep during the day
When feeling threatened, they curl up into a tight spiral with their shells to the outside to protect themselves

Habitat Maintenance

Change water daily
Mist terrariums every other day; millipedes need a moist environment; avoid direct sunlight as it can be fatal to the millipede
Thoroughly clean the tank as needed: set millipede aside in a secure habitat; scrub the tank and furnishings with a 3% bleach solution; rinse thoroughly with water, removing all smell of bleach; dry the tank and furnishings; and add clean substrate

Grooming and Hygiene

Handle as little as possible; wash hands before and after handling; do not allow millipede's secretion into contact with eyes, mouth or open wounds

Signs of a Healthy Animal

- Eats regularly
- Active and alert
- Body is rounded and full
- Healthy skin (exoskeleton)

Common Health Issues

Health Issue (alpha)	Symptoms or Causes	Suggested Action
Dehydration	Lethargic; shriveled appearance.	Consult your exotic animal veterinarian.
Fungus	Loss of appetite, white fuzzy patches.	Consult your exotic animal veterinarian.

Red Flags

- Poor appetite
- Fungus
- Lethargic
- Dull shell (exoskeleton)

If you notice any of these signs, please contact your exotic animal veterinarian.

Sources

Millipedeology by Michael Ross
Minibeasts as Pets by Elaine Landau

Note: The information on this Care Sheet is not a substitute for veterinary care. If you need additional information, please refer to the above sources or contact your veterinarian as appropriate.