

Praying Mantis

Sphodromantodea lineola



CARE SHEET

Developed with and approved by a Qualified Veterinarian

There are over 2,000 species of praying mantises. They get their name from the way in which they hold their front legs, as though in prayer. The name mantis comes from the Greek word for prophet. Their fascinating appearance and behavior make them highly interesting pets.



Is a praying mantis 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"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

1. I can feed and clean up after a praying mantis daily
2. I want a pet that doesn't need to be cuddled or touched.
3. I feel comfortable feeding live food to a praying mantis.
4. I can commit to providing proper care for a praying mantis.
5. A mature person will provide responsible and primary care for this companion animal.

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

Average Size Up to 12 inches long, depending on species **Life Span** Up to 1 year with proper care

Diet Provide a variety of live insects, such as crickets, mealworms, waxworms, butter worms, and roaches; feed juveniles pinhead crickets and fruit flies

Food should be half the size or less of the mantis head; remove uneaten food, particularly for juveniles, as crickets can harm them when the mantises are molting

Feeding Feed juveniles every day; feed adults twice a week

Housing Size – Appropriate size terrarium with a screen lid for an adult mantis

Substrate – Mulch-type commercial material; unbleached paper towels, soil, dampened sphagnum moss, and bark

Habitat – Provide non-toxic plants and branches for mantis to perch on, hide, and hang from when molting; for molting, the branch should be three times the length of the mantis; mist every day to maintain high humidity; mantids should be housed separately, one to a cage

Temperature – Keep temperature range from 70° F. to 82° F.; place heating strips or pads under the cage

Lighting – Mantises have no special lighting needs; avoid direct sunlight; to view them at night, use a black or infrared light

Water – May not always drink directly from a bowl and rely on moisture on decor and in collecting pools in the tank; always keep a shallow bowl of fresh chlorine-free water available for when they do drink and to maintain humidity

Do not house praying mantises together, they are cannibalistic

Recommended Supplies

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate size habitat with lid | <input type="checkbox"/> Mist bottle |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Substrate | <input type="checkbox"/> Branches and logs for hiding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate food | <input type="checkbox"/> Infrared or black light |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Small dish for water | <input type="checkbox"/> Thermometer and humidity gauge |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Book about praying mantises | <input type="checkbox"/> Heat source |

Praying Mantis

Sphodromantodea lineola



CARE SHEET

Developed with and approved by a Qualified Veterinarian

Normal Behavior and Interaction

The praying mantis is the only insect that can rotate its head 180°
Some mantises may learn to feed from your hand
They molt (shed their skin) several times before fully grown; during molting, they hang suspended from the tank lid or a branch and push themselves backwards out of the old skin; they are very vulnerable during this period and should be left alone

Habitat Maintenance

Change water in the bowl daily
Mist habitat daily to maintain high humidity
Thoroughly clean the tank at least once a week: set mantis 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

No grooming or special hygienic care is required for mantises
Always wash your hands before and after touching your mantis or habitat contents to help prevent *Salmonella* and other infectious diseases

Signs of a Healthy Animal

- Eats regularly
- Active and alert
- Body is full, limbs are straight
- Healthy exoskeleton

Common Health Issues

Health Issue (alpha)	Symptoms or Causes	Suggested Action
Dehydration	Lethargic, poor shedding, shriveled appearance.	Consult your exotic animal veterinarian.
Falls, injuries	Bleeding.	Coat wound with fingernail hardener.

Red Flags

- Swollen limbs
- Weight loss
- Dull exoskeleton
- Lethargic
- Abnormal feces
- Bumps, sores, or abrasions
- Discharge in mouth or eyes

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

Sources

Praying Mantises by Larry Dane Brimner
The Praying Mantids by Frederick Prete, Harrington Wells, and Lawrence E. Hurd (editors)

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.