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BIRD EATING SPIDERS

The “Bird Eating Spiders” of Australia are our largest arachnids (genus *Selenocosmia*). These spiders are also sometimes referred to as the Australian Tarantula, Whistling Spider or Barking Spider. Your new pet comes from the northern areas of the country where the temperature is consistently warm. This means that you will need to provide an enclosure with some form of heat source included. This may be as simple as a range of light bulbs, or you may choose to use a heat mat. (If using a heat mat do not use one that covers the full area of the enclosure). Our spider enclosures offer the ability to retain moisture, keep the animal securely in it’s home, provide easy access for feeding and have heating built in. (thermostat control is also available.) Air temps in the high twenties are ideal.

The spider’s life span varies dramatically between the male and females of the species. The females live for an average of 10 years, whereas males usually expire at around the 3 - 4 years of age. This obviously leaves you saying “Well then, give me a girl spider.... “. Unfortunately sexing the animals is not always possible. An indication can be taken from the body shape, but a well fed male may pass as a female. The males, once they reach sexual maturity, cease to eat and in the wild go on the search for a female to fertilise. The onset of sexual maturity is shown by the appearance of breeding spikes on the forelegs of a male animal after his final moult. We try to source only females, but sometimes a male may slip through.

Similar to some other spiders, the bird spider likes to burrow to escape the heat of the day, so be sure you use a fine substrate like clean loam or potting mix that will allow them to dig. Be extremely careful if using potting mixes though as these can sometimes contain pesticides, and or fertilizers which may be harmful to your new little friend. (AMGROW make a totally organic potting mix which we have found to be safe) A number of rocks or pieces of bark and timber should also be included in the enclosure to give your spider a sense of security. The spider will drape web over an area of the enclosure which you should not disturb while it is in use. When this web gets covered in dirt, or falls into obvious disuse it can be gathered up & discarded.

Water can be provided by keeping an area of Sphagnum Moss in one corner of the enclosure and keeping this moist. The cage should be **lightly** “misted” with a fine spray of water two or three times a week as well. (just enough to keep the enclosure humid)

Spiders can climb smooth surfaces, so a glass or plastic enclosure is not guaranteed to be escape proof. It is important therefore to ensure that the top of the enclosure is snug fitting, this will also stop any of the spiders food items from escaping.

Feeding your new spider is as easy as supplying it with crickets, mealworms, beetles moths etc, but if you are using crickets please ensure that you do not use female crickets as the cricket may lay eggs in the enclosure & the young crickets cause irritation to your spider. A lot of spiders will accept frozen pinkie mice and almost all of the animals that we sell will accept this food as they have been captive bred. Whatever food item you do choose though, ensure that it is not going to become the predator and turn the tables on your spider. Add food for the spider every third day or so if you are feeding small insects, less frequently if you

are feeding larger prey items. If your spider is eating each meal as it is offered you may want to increase the amount of food. If the spider does not eat the meal; wait until it has, before you offer it any more.

Your spider is a venomous animal which while not generally considered to be lethal to humans, will cause an extremely painful bite. These animals can cause extreme injury to a small child, So PLEASE refrain from handling them. The safe keeping of this animal is YOUR responsibility.