

Basic Mantis Care Guide

By Ashleigh, co founder of PedeMyPants

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Enclosure - appropriately sized plastic, glass, mesh, or acrylic enclosure. Make sure ventilation holes are **SMALLER** than your mantis and its prey items.
- Substrate - a natural soil substrate such as EcoEarth or Reptisoil.
- Spray bottle for misting with fine droplets.
- Tiny water dish - optional, and use caution.
- Thermometer/Hygrometer.
- Mantis-safe decor - anything that is large enough to fall over on your mantis should be secured in place via non-toxic glue or magnets.

We keep most of our mantis nymphs (young) in 8oz or 16oz deli cups with sticks for climbing. As they molt and grow, they can be transitioned to acrylic or plastic enclosures with ventilation holes that are **SMALLER** than they are! Different mantis species have different humidity and temperature requirements, so ensure you research the species you want to keep beforehand and choose a permanent enclosure that is appropriate and will help maintain correct environmental parameters.

Be sure to choose a spray bottle with a fine mist. Misting requirements will vary depending on the humidity requirements of your chosen species. Typically, we mist our mantises every 1-3 days.

For their insectivorous diet, small mantis nymphs can start with *D. melanogaster* fruit flies and transition to *D. hydei* after a molt or two. After a couple of molts, they can usually begin to take other prey items such as blue bottle flies, waxworms, small hornworms, small mealworms, small roaches, etc.

Many seasoned keepers in the mantis hobby suggest avoiding crickets as a food source for mantises due to their ability to “bite back” and potential for higher parasitic load than other feeder insects. Although we have never had any specific issues ourselves, we do not feed crickets to our mantises for this reason.

Unlike spiders, mantises consume the entire prey item (besides the occasional wing), so it is advised to feed mostly soft-bodied prey to avoid impactions. For this reason, we typically feed flies, waxworms, wax moths, and hornworms - leaving mealworms and roaches as last-resort feeders. A varied diet is important for the health of your mantis.

We offer our nymphs food every 2-3 days until they have molted a few times, then we begin offering food based on abdomen size.

Humidity requirements differ by species. Most mantises do well with a humidity around 50-60%, and mist with distilled or RO water as needed. Some species may require higher humidity and/or increased ventilation. Cross-ventilation (air movement from multiple directions in the enclosure) is critical for higher humidity species, to ensure the air in the enclosure doesn't become stagnant and cause mold or other fungal growth that can make your mantis sick.

Temperature requirements differ by species, but most do well at room temperature or slightly above. Some species may do better with a mild heat source.

In general, always research the specific species you are interested in keeping before you get them, and make sure you are prepared to give them everything they need to survive AND thrive!

More questions? Shoot us an email at pedemypants@gmail.com, or message us on Instagram @pedemypants and we would be glad to assist!

