

General Millipede (Diplopoda) Care Guide



Overview

Millipedes are a very diverse group of myriapods found throughout Australia in moist areas. Millipedes are similar to Centipedes however are herbivores and detritivores as opposed to carnivores and have 2 pairs of legs per body segment compared to Centipedes' single pair of legs per body segment.

Millipedes are generally moderately large, slow-moving creatures that move around the forest floor after rain feeding on decaying organic matter such as fallen leaves and wood, algae, lichen and sometimes moss. When disturbed, Millipedes will curl into a ball and most species can secrete a smelly yellow substance from special pores on the body. This liquid can stain skin and may irritate sensitive areas such as the eyes, always wash your hands after handling millipedes. Some millipedes, namely a few members in the family Paradoxosomatidae can secrete Hydrogen cyanide, a very toxic compound that is capable of outright killing small animals and may be harmful to human health. This may come as a liquid or gas. The *Somethus castaneus* pictured above are one species that has this ability.

Care

Millipedes desiccate easily and require moist substrate to survive. Coco-peat is an extremely good substrate, the soft texture allows millipedes to burrow and retains moisture well. Alternatively, a nutritious substrate (That is a substrate which millipedes can consume) may also be beneficial. Organic compost purchased from hardware stores is excellent and millipedes love to eat it, however always ensure it does not contain any added chemical or fertilizers.

Millipedes eat decaying organic matter and need dry, fallen leaf litter and decaying (pulpy) wood. Leaves can be collected from local bushland, ensure to check each leaf individually and make sure no excess dirt or other unwanted things are attached to the leaf. Pulpy wood is formed by wood that has been decomposed by fungus over time and has become extremely soft. Millipedes can eat through their food quite quickly once settled in and turn it into fecal pellets, make sure to fully replace the substrate every 6 months and top up leaves and wood as necessary.

Enclosure

A good enclosure should have low to zero airflow, be deep enough to house at least a few centimetres of substrate and should be large enough to allow for ample room for the millipede(s) to explore as they can be quite active at night

Common species

We sell Australia's largest ranges of millipedes from all across the continent. Other species may be available from other companies and pet stores, usually those sold as "Red-legged millipedes" This typically refers to any Rhinocricid millipede found in SEQ and are usually large, black species with reddish-brown legs. However, most of the time there will be several species sold as one so pay close attention to the amount of body segments, lustre, leg colour and colour and width of the bands on each segment (if there are any).

If you have any more questions please email us at info@bugfrenzy.com.au

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