

Hermit Crab Care Sheet

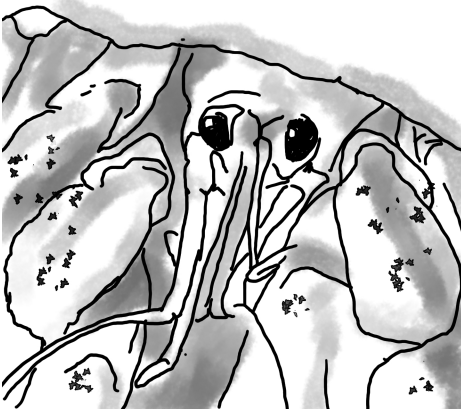


Your Pets Super Store

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Congratulations on your new pet. Hermit Crabs are active and entertaining pets. They are clean and odorless. They enjoy the company of other hermit crabs. In nature they live in colonies of 100 or more. With proper care hermit crabs can live up to twenty years. Hermit crabs do not transmit any known diseases to humans. They are hypo-allergenic which makes them great pet for people with allergies. Hermit crabs are not aggressive and can be easily handled. Hold your hand out flat and let them walk across, but avoid squeezing as they may become frightened and pinch. The large claw is for climbing and defense, the small one is for eating and drinking.

HOUSING-----

Hermit crabs should be kept in an aquarium with a glass or plexi-glass top. The glass allows for stable temperature and humidity. You will need two gallons per medium sized crab, so a ten gallon tank would make a good home for three to five crabs. Keep in mind that your crabs will grow. A base of two to three inches of gravel, coconut fiber or sand will give your crab the digging opportunities it needs to de-stress and molt. Calci-sand is an excellent choice since it is easy to clean and provides your crab with calcium and digging opportunities. Crabs are from tropical regions and need to be kept warm, between 72-84 degrees Fahrenheit. An under tank heater can provide correct temperature and allow for warm and cool sides of the habitat. Hermit crabs also need between 74% and 82% relative humidity to breathe. Do not use reptile heat lamps as they will dehydrate the crabs. Hermit crabs need a dish of water they can climb into. Provide a small sponge or reptile moss to prevent drowning. Each crab should have two to three extra shells available to move into as they molt and grow. Crabs love to climb and hide, so provide them with Cholla wood, cork bark, netting, coconut huts, and half logs.

DIET-----

Be sure to provide your hermit crabs with calcium such as oyster shell or a cuttle bone if you are not using calci sand. They will also need de-chlorinated water. De-chlorinator can be added to your tap water or you can use distilled or spring water. Your crab will need a marine salt water bath in addition to their drinking water. Crabs can be fed a commercial crab diet and treats like coconut, fruits and vegetables. Hermits tend to bury food so be sure to remove uneaten food daily to avoid mold and odors. Pure water is essential. Hermits do not tolerate chlorine, iron or very hard water.

CLEANING-----

Uneaten food should be removed every day. Check for and remove droppings as well. Rinse and dry the water dish daily and refill with fresh, clean water. Change the base material three times a year. Do not use soap, bleach or other household cleaning products. Use de-chlorinated water and vinegar for cleaning.

HEALTH-----

In a dry climate (indoor heat in winter, AC in summer) hermits need a bath every other day. Submerge them in room temperature water for one minute then remove and let them air dry. Pure water is essential for good health. As crabs grow they molt by shedding their exoskeleton. This can happen once a month to once a year, depending on the size of your crab. At this time they need to be kept extra moist and in a medium which allows them to burrow. They are vulnerable and inactive at this time and may need to be isolated until they settle into their new shell. At this time missing legs are regenerated. As they grow, larger shells should be available. Stress is the most common hermit crab problem. Stressed crabs are lethargic, lose legs and claws and leave their shell without returning.

FERTILITY-----

Consult one of our pet specialists.

CHECKLIST-----

- _____ glass aquarium with glass or plexi-glass top (two gallons per one medium crab)
- _____ substrate-sand, Calci-sand or coconut fiber
- _____ humidity gauge
- _____ thermometer
- _____ under tank heater or lights
- _____ food and water dishes, non metal
- _____ extra shells
- _____ water de-chlorinator
- _____ marine salt
- _____ hermit crab food and treats
- _____ accessories to hide in and climb on