

\*\*\*\*\*PLEASE READ\*\*\*\*\*

## HOW TO CARE FOR YOUR LAND HERMIT CRAB

Crabs with purple, red colors (Coenobita Clypeatus)

Hermit crabs in their native environment live inland away from the water and the beach. Their diet consists of leaf litter, fruits and vegetation. They also enjoy chewing and eating bark and have a special preference for decaying wood (except pine or cedar.) When they have been domesticated it is recommended that they be fed a good commercial food (such as that produced by FMR) and on alternate days treats may be fed, (such as that produced by FMR) or coconut, romaine lettuce, apple, white bread, popcorn with or without sea salt, etc. It is recommended to offer oyster shell, egg shell or a cuttlebone for a calcium source. Land hermit crabs eat very slowly and very little so all uneaten food should be removed each day to avoid spoilage.

**Water Quality is a must.** To provide the necessary moisture for your hermit crabs, it is important to bathe this little friend. In climates which are humid, once a week, in summer, twice a week, in winter bathing will suffice. In climates that are arid or when very dry heat provides warmth for your house, bathing every other day is preferable. Lightly misting your crabs outside of the tank on non bathing days is also desirable but not absolutely necessary. Providing water in which the crab may climb is important. Use a non metallic container. A small sponge should be placed in the container to provide safety and prevent possible drowning. Water quality is a must. Our rule of thumb is, if the available water supply is acceptable for keeping aquarium fish, it is acceptable for hermit crabs. If you must treat the water for fish, treat the water for hermit crabs. Hard water with high iron content can do the most damage to your hermit crabs. Bottled water is the safest.

Crabs should be kept in an aquarium, the larger, the better, with a 2 to 3 inch base of gravel or sand. The temperature should be between 70 and 75 degrees. A heater can be purchased and placed under the aquarium to maintain the temperature above 70 degrees when one's home is programmed to remain in the 60's. We do not recommend using a **FULL SPECTRUM LIGHT OR HEAT LAMPS** on the aquarium or the use of corn cob or cedar shavings. This tends to dry out the hermit crabs and/or dehydrate them.

Hermit crabs are not aggressive like many of the sea crabs and can be handled. They climb on the outstretched palm of your hand without difficulty but avoid the large purple pincher claw which is used for defense and for holding onto limbs for climbing and for balancing. If one is unfortunate enough to have a crab pinch the skin, place the area where the pincher and the skin meet under hot water. The pincher will normally turn loose immediately. The smaller claw is used to pass food and water to the mouth. The name "HERMIT" is misapplied, for in the wild they live and travel in colonies of a few dozen to over a hundred. It is recommended that in captivity they be kept in the company of other crabs for their own contentment. They communicate by sound and it is not uncommon to hear them "talking" to each other. They seldom fight, except occasionally over a shell dispute. They are clean and odorless and may be released in the home for exercise and for observation of their comical antics if desired. They are good climbers and will enjoy coral or any type of non-resinous wood placed in their aquarium to exercise on. Like most other creatures, they respond to gentle care and learn to trust their keeper. It is known that some crabs have been kept in the home as pets for over 20 years.

Land hermit crabs cannot reproduce in captivity. Their eggs must hatch in the sea. Like other crabs they grow by shredding their outer exoskeleton. This is the most important step toward growth a small crab will make. During this time they shed all their skin (which looks like an empty skeleton of a crab.) They need to be kept extra moist and in a medium into which they can burrow themselves. It also may be necessary to isolate the crab for a couple of days because they are very soft, vulnerable and inactive. However this is an important stage of development for it is in this period that any missing legs, etc., are regenerated by the crabs. Older crabs molt less frequently but require the same care. As the crabs grow they will need spare shells to grow into and they also seem to enjoy moving into empty shells to select the home that feels best. It is advisable to **NEVER** attempt to remove a crab from its sea shell because it will allow itself to be torn apart rather than give up it's protective home.

Stress is the most common problem seen with hermit crabs. Ramifications of stress are lethargic crabs, loss of appendages (legs and claws), and those which leave their shell without returning to it. If these symptoms occur, a tetracycline solution must be administered to the crab. Go to our website to receive the exact procedure.

It is also comforting to know that hermit crabs do not carry or transmit any known diseases to mankind and they are hypo-allergenic, great as a pet for those with allergies.

# More Health Hints For Hermit Crabs!

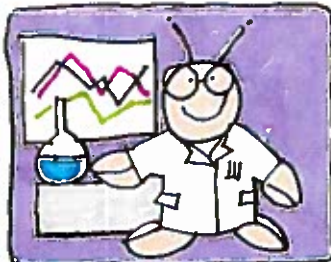


**1.** Provide new shells for crabs to grow into.



Hermit crabs love to switch shells but need larger shells as they grow to maintain adequate body moisture. FMR offers a wide variety of shells. For a proper fit, the new shell should be larger than the present shell, and the shell opening should be the same size as the crab's larger pincher.

**2.** Not all shells are suitable for crab homes.



To ensure that tree crabs function in their homes, shells should be properly cleaned, processed and chosen by a knowledgeable hermit crab distributor.

**3.** Bathing Crabs



Crabs will clean themselves if you provide them with fresh water in their bowls. It is a good idea to bathe crabs. Totally submerge them once in room temperature water for 1 minute and then allow them to air dry.

**4.** Create a social, healthy environment.



Crabs thrive on company and are the most active and entertaining when they coexist in pairs or in a tree crab community. When increasing the number of hermit crabs, be sure to provide more space for them. They also need a warm and humid environment, 70-75 degrees F.

**5.** Promote exercise by creating a playground.



Crabs love to climb! Coral and choya wood will encourage activity. Again, be sure they have plenty of room to play!

**6.** Serve a balanced diet and fresh water in shell dishes daily.



Crabs need calcium obtained from shell dishes. And, they thrive on premixed hermit crab food and treats, along with a variety of vegetables and fruits. They will bury their food, so make sure you remove all uneaten food prior to their daily feeding.



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