



Aussie Scorpions as pets

General Ecology: Australian Scorpions are nocturnal and are related to spiders. Depending on species, they have a life span from 4-10 years. Australian Scorpions are one of the few successful animal groups able to inhabit a wide variety of habitat types including semi-arid and desert areas. The very active desert species usually dig deep burrows and are best kept individually as they can be cannibalistic. Coastal species often excavate tunnels under rocks or fallen timber and can usually be kept in small groups provided there is a rock or log available for each individual.

Breeding Habits: A Scorpion's somewhat amazing mating ritual is initiated when the male grasps the female's pincers and a dance is performed. During the dance the male deposits a sperm sac and manoeuvres the female over this sac allowing the sperm to enter her reproductive opening. Unlike other arachnids the female scorpion gives birth to live young, which are not encased within a sac. These live young are then carried on the females back for a few weeks before they are ready to fend for themselves. Like all other arachnids several moults are required before sexual maturity is reached.

Food Requirements: Scorpions feed on a variety of insects including crickets, mealworms and wood roaches. They seize their prey with pincers before the stinger is used to inject their victims with venom. This venom liquifies the internals of the prey and softens the exoskeleton enabling the pincers to tear off soft tissue pieces, which are passed on to the mouth and consumed. Scorpions can survive extended periods of time without eating.

Enclosures: Scorpions can be housed in a very simple glass aquarium with ample surface area and a good layer of substrate, such as red desert dirt. A water bowl shallow enough to prevent drowning and a couple of rocks and logs for hiding places are also required. Soil under some of these hiding places should be dampened with water on a regular basis. We also recommend that a small heat mat be placed in one corner on the outside, under the enclosure.

Safe Handling: Scorpions are venomous animals that possess a stinger located on the tip of their tail, which is capable of inflicting repeated and very painful stings. For this reason *they are not suitable pets for young children*. Handling of Scorpions is not recommended but they are interesting animals that are kept purely for observation.

WARNING: Fly spray or any other repellent will kill your scorpion. Don't leave your scorpion in the sun, it will only take a few minutes to fry your scorpion.

Interesting Fact: All scorpions have an amazing ability to glow in the dark! This can be observed by placing an ultra violet light over the enclosure, and by keeping the influence of other light sources to an absolute minimum.

**For the acquisition of scorpions and further information
phone Shane at Gates of Eden Nature Centre on (02) 4973 3858**