

TERRARIUM RECIPE CARD

Project
Level: Easy

Materials

- Container: 10 Gallon glass aquarium for one tarantula (one per habitat)
- Mesh screen lid
- Playground sand (in bag purchased from home improvement store)
- Dust mask
- Small resin drinking dish
- Small resin cave or cork tree bark to use as a cave
- Cactus plant or artificial cactus plant decoration
- RO water or water conditioner to treat tap water
- Aquarium thermometer
- Cricket or feed keeper
- Leather or garden gloves
- Rose Haired Chilean Tarantula

Food

- Crickets
- Mealworms
- And other feeder insects
- Calcium powder
- See Insect Keeper page for feed instructions

Recommended Temperature:

Tarantulas prefer a temperature of 70-80° F (21-26° C) It is not necessary to use heat lamps or lighting for this terrarium because Tarantulas are nocturnal. Use a heat pad placed under the terrarium to warm the tank if classroom temperatures are below 70.



TARANTULA DESERT HABITAT

Set up: In this terrarium you are trying to simulate a desert. For this reason we are using clean playground sand purchased from a home improvement store. Do not use playground sand from a school as it may have bacteria and impurities. This terrarium is heavy. Be sure to build the terrarium where you plan to observe it, or get help when moving the terrarium. Put on a dust mask and pour playground sand into the aquarium until it is about 5 cm deep. If you are using a real cactus, be sure to wear leather gloves to plant the cactus into the sand, or anchor the decorative artificial cactus into the sand. Place the shallow water dish (we use one that looks like a rock feature) into the terrarium as well as a cave or piece of bark where the tarantula can burrow. Fill the shallow dish with RO or water treated with conditioner. Using the leather or garden gloves, place the tarantula into the aquarium. Put the mesh screen lid on the terrarium so that the animal does not escape. It is not uncommon for tarantulas to climb the glass or hang upside down from the mesh screen.

Maintenance: This terrarium is actually large for the animal, but it gives the tarantula plenty of space to walk around. Excretions from Tarantulas do not have an odor and only happen occasionally so therefore you need only change out the top layer of sand once a semester which will include removing webbing left in the sand to help catch crickets. Place the tarantula in a container or keeper that is secured so that it cannot escape while you are cleaning. Occasionally the tarantula will molt and will look like there are two tarantulas in the terrarium. You can gently remove the exoskeleton from the terrarium so that you and your students can investigate it, but remember that the rose hairs on the exoskeleton can cause skin rashes for some people who handle it. When the terrarium is not under observation the tarantula can move into a smaller terrarium with a wood bark substrate that is lighter and easier to move and transport.

Care: This habitat is for observation purposes. Students should not handle the tarantula. Although this tarantula is fairly docile, if startled it does expel its hairs as a defense against predators. It can be fed 2-3 crickets a week, occasionally give crickets that have been gutloaded for a healthy exoskeleton. Tarantulas will not eat dead insects, they must hunt their prey. Do not overfeed the tarantula. Crickets are known to gang up and kill a tarantula. Keep water dish clean and wash out any dead insects. Tarantulas will sometimes fast before a molt. They do drink water but most of the moisture they attain is from their prey. This is a great beginner terrarium that requires very little maintenance.