Wild Science

Animals · Care sheet

Stick Insect

Care Sheet

LIFESPAN	SIZE	HUMIDITY	TEMPERATURE
1–2 years in captivity	**2.5–30 cm** depending on species	**60–80%**	**18–25 °C**

Get to know



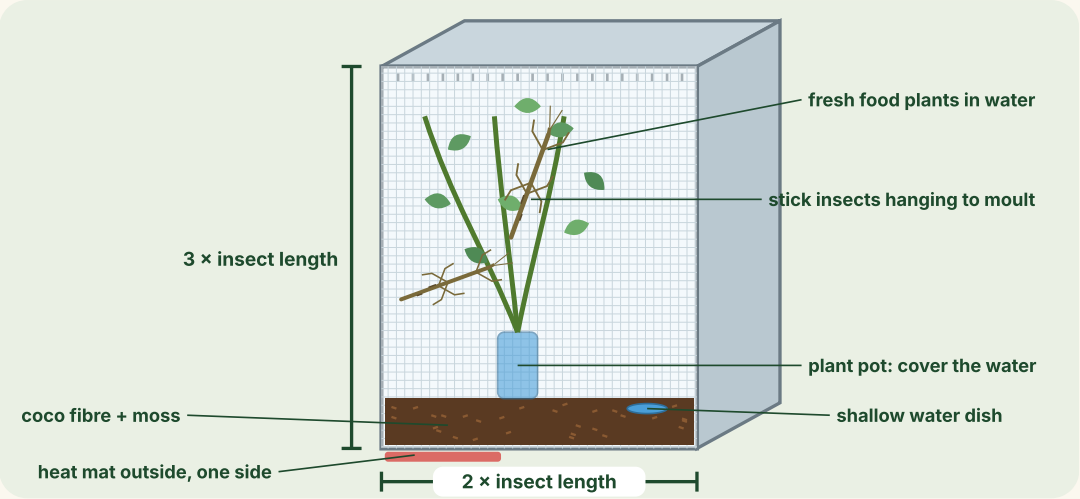
Stick insects live worldwide in warm and tropical places, in a huge variety of shapes, sizes and colours: some look like sticks, others like leaves. Keep their diet and surroundings consistent. Many can live together if they share a similar habitat and have plenty of space.

They are easy to care for and great for children, but delicate. Handle them gently: they grip tightly, and pulling can cause a leg to come off. When threatened they freeze or sway like a branch in the wind. As they get used to you, they'll happily crawl onto your hand.

Enclosure

A terrarium or net cage works, at least 3 × the insect's length tall and 2 × its length wide, with extra width for more insects. The height is essential for moulting. Non-net cages need good ventilation, and all entrances must be secure, as they squeeze through small gaps.

A stick insect enclosure. Tall enough to hang and moult, with fresh food plants.



Temperature

Most stick insects thrive at 18–25 °C, but research your species. A heat mat on the **outside** of one side of the enclosure creates a gradient so they can choose their spot.

Environment

Substrate

Coco fibre holds moisture well, with sphagnum moss for extra humidity.

Décor

No artificial plants needed, as they eat real foliage. Add plenty of branches and sticks for climbing and camouflage, small rocks or pebbles, and hiding spots.

Cleaning

Spot clean waste as you see it. Depending on your insects, deep clean at least once a week with a safe disinfectant and fresh substrate.

Diet

Fresh leaves

always

Fresh leaves are a must, and they love flowers too. Different species have favourites, so research yours. Offer plenty: they eat until satisfied.

Water

every day

A shallow bowl at the cooler end, plus misting so they can sip droplets from leaves and walls.

Stick insect limbs



A stick insect beside a coin for scale

Stick insects can regrow lost legs when they moult as they grow, and can drop a leg on purpose to escape danger. An adult that loses a leg can still live a healthy, full life.

Moulting

Stick insects moult as they grow, less often as they mature, often hanging upside down to do it, so a tall enclosure is vital. The right humidity helps them moult smoothly and avoid dehydration and deformities. Leave them alone afterwards while the new exoskeleton hardens.

Health and welfare

A healthy stick insect:

- Is alert
- Eats and drinks well
- Sheds its skin easily and completely
- Moves its legs smoothly





Diseases and concerns

Research their needs before getting them, and contact a vet or invertebrate specialist if you suspect illness.

Overcrowding

Too little space causes stress, aggression and even cannibalism.

Fungal infections

Particularly harmful, especially if green spores appear on the body. Keep the enclosure clean and correctly humid.

Get advice

A local vet or invertebrate specialist can help.

Transport

Keep your stick insects safe and comfortable when you travel:

- Enough space to sit comfortably without being knocked around
- Cover the box with a cloth to calm nervous travellers
- Well ventilated, but secure against escape
- Bring a battery heat pack or hot water bottle for warmth