

## Care guide

### Fringed Jumping Spider, *Portia fimbriata*



Fringed Jumping Spiders are fascinating spiders which are found in northern Australia. They are regarded being the most intelligent spiders in the world due to their ability to problem solve and modify their behaviour while stalking their prey. They prey predominantly upon other spiders and will utilise different methods of attack depending on the species they are targeting. They jump upon their prey to bite it and employ a wide variety of strategies in order to get themselves into a suitable launch position. They will adjust their strategies if they are not successful and appear to learn from their experiences. When stalking orb-weaving spiders they will pluck at the orb-web in a variety of ways in order to entice the web's owner to a vulnerable position. They will alter the style and frequency of plucking if they don't get a response. They will also systematically explore the surrounds of the web continuously looking around for a good attack position.

The movement of this species is different than most jumping spiders which typically move in an energetic manner. Fringed Jumping Spiders usually move in a slow rocking motion and this, combined with their cryptic body form makes them appear as wild blown debris.

These spiders grow by shedding their outer skeleton (exoskeleton). This process is called ecdysis or moulting. They moult every few weeks until they mature. Prior to each moult their colour darkens and they stop feeding a few days. Once they begin to moult they usually complete the process in about 10 minutes. They usually will not feed for at least 24 hours after moulting, usually longer. Males and females can be identified as they mature; males have enlarged bulbs on the ends of their pedipalps (feelers) which females lack, and males tend to have thin bodies and longer legs.

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**Food:** Live spiders. Orb-weaving spiders are ideal, but they will feed on a range of other species including other jumping spiders. Although they can capture spiders larger than themselves it is safer to feed them spiders about ½ their size.

Feeding once a week is recommended, but young spiders may feed more often when they are growing. It is best to introduce a single food spider within view of your Fringed Jumping Spider but not immediately beside it so that contact is immediate. If interested, the Fringed Jumping Spider will begin to stalk the other spider – the capture time may take several minutes to several hours depending on the circumstances. Remove the live food spider after a few hours if no interest is shown and attempt feeding another day.

Avoid feeding this species snare building spiders such as Red House Spiders, Brown House Spiders and Daddy Long-legs as they may capture and kill your spider.

**Water:** Mist spray lightly around your spider every second day – it will drink the droplets. Mist spraying should only be fine so that it evaporates within a few hours – pooling water may drown your spider.

**Enclosure:** These spiders are relatively small so jars or small plastic (food storage) containers make ideal enclosures. Ventilation in the form of small holes is suitable – ensure holes are not large enough to enable the spider to escape.

**Substrate:** No specific substrate is required, but coco-peat or paper towel may be used to absorb excess moisture and maintain humidity.

**Temperature/humidity:** The safe temperature range for these spiders is 16 - 24°C. They will tolerate both higher and lower temperatures for periods of time. Avoid extreme lows (below 10°C) and highs (above 30°C). Humidity 60-80%.

**Life span:** 1-2 years.

**Handling:** These spiders mildly venomous but are regarded as harmless to human. Due to their size they could easily be lost so handling is not recommended.

**Other information:** These spiders will spend long periods of time motionless when not interested in food. This is normal behaviour.

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