



## CARE GUIDE



# DESERT BARK HUNTSMAN

*Pediana horni*



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# DESERT BARK HUNTSMAN

*Pediana horni*



Desert Bark Huntsmen are small to medium sized huntsmen, growing up to a body length of around 30mm and a leg span of around 60mm. They are found throughout inland Australia in semi-arid to arid habitats, typically within savannah woodlands. They hide beneath the bark of trees during the day and hunt on the trunks at night, with a preference for thick rough barked trees. They feed on a wide range of other invertebrates including moths, crickets, cockroaches and other spiders.

These spiders are very fast, and have the ability to run sideways and squeeze into very narrow crevices. They are covered in fine sensory hairs which are extremely sensitive to air movement. This assists them in detecting the movement of prey and the approach of predators.

Like other huntsmen, this species lays its eggs encased within a flattened white silk egg sac. They usually secure this in a dark place such as under loose tree bark and stay with their eggs until after they hatch. The young emerge around a month after being laid (they will develop slower in cool conditions). Egg sacs usually contain around 100 spiderlings. The spiderlings will cluster around their mother for a week or so after they emerge and will tolerate each other during this stage. Once they disperse any chance meetings of the siblings will often result in one eating the other.

These spiders grow by shedding their outer skeleton (exoskeleton). This process is called ecdysis or moulting. To moult successfully they need to hang uninterrupted beneath a leaf or branch. Their colour darkens and they stop feeding a few days before moulting, and once they begin to moult they usually complete the process in about 10 minutes. They usually will not feed for about 24 hours after moulting. 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.



## FOOD

Live insects. Crickets, cockroaches, moths and flies are ideal. The food insects should be no larger than 1/3 of the size of your spider. Feeding twice a week is recommended, but young spiders will feed more often when they are growing. Remove live insects from your enclosure if your spider has not eaten them within 12 hours.

## WATER

Mist spray lightly around your spider every second day – it will drink the droplets if thirsty. Take care not to over spray the enclosure, as this species like dry conditions.

## ENCLOSURE

The enclosure needs to be large enough to allow your spider to shed its exoskeleton properly. When moulting they will hang from a high point in the enclosure and require a minimum of twice their leg span to moult successfully. Vertical space of around 3x your spider's leg span is recommended. Minibeast Wildlife's pop-up mesh enclosures or acrylic habitats are ideal. Add flat pieces of rough bark set at vertical or diagonal angles to your enclosure to give the spider something to climb on and hide behind. Ensure the enclosure is not placed in direct sunlight as this may cause it to overheat. Make sure there is plenty of ventilation in your enclosure; fly wire mesh is ideal, but ensure there are no gaps which allow the spider to get out.

## SUBSTRATE

Not essential, but you can use leaf litter or coco-peat to help soak up any excess moisture.

## CLEANING AND MAINTENANCE

Remove any food waste that has fallen to the bottom of the enclosure.

## HANDLING

*\*The decision to handle these spiders is the responsibility of the owner.* These spiders are quite timid and are reluctant to bite and generally regarded as harmless. They are capable of biting if threatened. If handling, it should be done with care and in a safe place that doesn't allow the spider to be injured or easily escape.

## TEMPERATURE

This species will do best at 20 – 25°C, but will tolerate daytime temperatures around 30°C and much cooler overnight temperatures periodically. Consistent lower temperatures will result in a slower growth rate (eg. 15- 22°C.)

## COMMON ISSUES

Due to their relatively flattened bodies and fast speed, these spiders are excellent escape artists! Ensure there are no gaps around the lid or doors of your enclosure, and take care not to allow your spider to run out when opening it.



40-60%



1-2 years life span



These animals are captive bred, and should not be released into the wild

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